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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Nature and well-being

building social and emotional capital through environmental volunteering

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STUART MUIRHEAD

**NATURE AND WELL-BEING: BUILDING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL
CAPITAL THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING**

PHD THESIS
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APRIL 2011

Table of Contents

List of Tables	i
List of Figures.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Author's Declaration	v
Abstract.....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Introducing well-being, embodiment, emotions and social capital.....	3
1.2 Volunteering and policy	7
1.2.1 Volunteering in Scotland and the UK	8
1.2.2 The current Scottish policy perspective on environmental volunteering.....	11
1.2.3 Environmental volunteering research and key contributions of the thesis	13
1.3 Forestry Commission Scotland: from productivism to nature and well-being	16
1.4 Research questions and thesis structure	24
Chapter 2: Literature Review	28
2.1 Introduction	28
2.2 Volunteering and citizenship.....	29
2.2.1 Understanding the interplay between volunteering and citizenship	29
2.2.2 Active citizenship and active communities	31
2.2.3 From active to ecological citizenship.....	33
2.2.4 General and environmental volunteering motivations	37
2.3 Emotional, physical and social well-being in environmental volunteering	42
2.3.1 Emotional geographies and well-being	43
2.3.2 Physical well-being and embodiment in environmental volunteering.....	47
2.3.3 Community, social capital and well-being.....	50
2.4 Landscapes, nature and emotion	52
2.4.1 Experiences of landscape	53
2.4.2 Therapeutic landscapes and experiences.....	55
2.5 Literature conclusion.....	61
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	63
3.1 Research design.....	63
3.2 The process of case study group selection	66
3.2.1 Selecting the areas.....	67
3.2.2 Compiling the database	69
3.2.3 Designing the postal questionnaire	71
3.2.4 Selection of ethnographic case studies.....	76
a) Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP)	81
b) Friends of Southside Park (FSP).....	82
c) Community Environmental Group (CEG).....	82
d) Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV).....	83
e) Natural Space Action (NSA).....	83
3.3 Conducting the ethnographic research strategy	84
3.3.1 Participant observation and keeping a field diary	85
3.3.2 Interviewing and focus group work	90
3.3.3 Committee meeting attendance	94

3.3.4 Analytical strategy	95
3.4 Ethics, positionality, emotions and embodiment	98
3.4.1 Group consent, informed consent and anonymisation	99
3.4.2 Practising an ethics of care.....	99
3.4.3 The challenge of personal ethics, experience and performance.....	102
3.4.4 Making first contact and embodying environmental ethics in research practice	107
3.4.5 The ESRC-CASE funded studentship.....	113
3.5 Methodology conclusion.....	114
Chapter 4: Setting the Organisational Context of Environmental Volunteering	116
4.1 Introduction	116
4.2 Organisational profiles	117
4.2.1 Role and funding	118
4.2.2 Organisation employees	120
4.2.3 Environmental volunteering locations	121
4.2.4 Networks and linkages	122
4.2.5 Diversity of profiles within the survey.....	124
4.3 Profiling environmental volunteers.....	125
4.3.1 Demographics	126
4.3.2 Motivations for volunteers joining the organisation	130
4.3.3 Activities undertaken by volunteers.....	131
4.3.4 Perceived benefits to the volunteers.....	133
4.4 Profile of the five case study groups selected	135
4.4.1 History and character	135
4.4.2 Group funding and partner relationships.....	143
4.4.3 The structure and volunteer composition of the case study groups	147
4.5 Discussion	151
Chapter 5: Motivations to Participate in Environmental Volunteering	154
5.1 General motivations to volunteer	154
5.2 Motivations involved in environmental volunteering.....	155
5.3 Initial motivations to volunteer	157
5.3.1 Environmental motivations to volunteer.....	158
a) Scalar connections.....	158
b) Temporal associations.....	163
i) Responsibility and stewardship	163
ii) Long-term change, planting of trees and seasonal cycles	165
c) Personal well-being and environmental motivations	166
d) Removal	169
5.3.2 Non-environmental motivations.....	171
a) Social factors within environmental volunteering	172
b) Non-environmental motivations and personal well-being.....	173
c) Keeping active.....	175
d) Acquire skills/training.....	177
e) Removal and non-environmental motivations	178
5.4 Cross-over motivations	180
5.4.1 Altruistic motivations.....	180
5.4.2 Personal well-being motivations	181
5.5 Continuing motivations to participate in environmental volunteering	181
5.5.1 Fulfilment of initial motivations	182
5.5.2 Unexpected impacts	184
5.5.3 Impact of social factors and community	187

5.5.4 Impacts of landscape and place	189
5.6 Motivations discussion	192
Chapter 6: Arrival, Task and Landscape	196
6.1 Volunteer arrival encounters	196
6.1.1 The initial arrival experience	198
6.1.2 Arrival in the landscape	203
6.1.3 Arrival summary	209
6.2 The importance of task	211
6.2.1 Group tasks	211
a) Fence removal	212
b) Tree felling	214
c) Rhododendron removal	215
d) Drainage ditching	217
e) Nursery tree removal	218
f) Committee meetings and fundraising	219
6.2.2 Individual tasks	222
a) Tree planting	223
b) Seed collection	224
c) Juniper seed release	225
d) Gardening	225
e) Litter picking	226
f) Graffiti removal	226
g) 'Satellite' volunteering	227
6.2.3 Mind placement on task	228
6.2.4 'Destructivism' and cathartic release	233
6.2.5 Reenergising and recharging	235
6.2.6 Embodiment	236
6.2.7 Stillness of task	240
6.2.8 Instant gratification versus long-term goals	242
6.3 Importance of landscape	246
6.3.1 Stillness in urban green spaces	246
6.3.2 Stillness in wilderness areas	248
6.3.3 Weather conditions	253
6.3.4 Seasonality	255
6.3.5 Beauty	257
6.4 Task and landscape discussion	260
Chapter 7: Community, Social Networks and Citizenship	265
7.1 Community and social networks	265
7.1.1 The bounded vision of a volunteer community	267
7.1.2 Beyond the bounded vision of community	272
7.1.3 Output and impact	276
7.1.4 'Stretched-out' communities	278
a) From imagined communities to local action	278
b) The physically distanced community	280
c) Physically proximate social networks	280
7.2 Volunteer identifications and interactions with citizenship	282
7.2.1 Individual citizenship interactions and group relations	283
a) Structured active citizenship	284
b) The complexities of citizenship associations	288
c) Politicised and activist engagement	290
d) Organisational disagreement	292

e) National identity within SFRP	294
7.2.2 Empowerment, ethics and scalar associations with citizenship	296
a) Empowerment and futility	296
b) Ethics underpinning ecological citizenship	299
c) Thinking across scales	300
7.3 Community and citizenship conclusions.....	302
Chapter 8: Well-being in Environmental Volunteering.....	306
8.1 Physical well-being	308
8.1.1 Physical activity, fitness and well-being	308
8.1.2 Embodiment and multi-sensory experiences	311
8.2 Spiritual and emotional well-being	315
8.2.1 Practicality, not spirituality	318
8.3 Social well-being.....	320
8.3.1 Collective identity	320
8.3.2 Group resilience and the importance of social connections.....	322
8.3.3 Contested spaces	325
8.4 Therapeutic landscapes and well-being	328
8.5 Well-being experiences through environmental volunteering	330
Chapter 9: Conclusions and Discussion	334
9.1 Understanding environmental volunteering motivations	335
9.2 Impacts of environmental volunteering on well-being	337
9.2.1 The role of landscape and nature	338
9.2.2 The role of embodiment and physicality.....	342
9.2.3 Community and social impacts	344
9.3 Wider implications of the thesis.....	347
9.3.1 Engendering social and emotional capital through active nature work	348
9.3.2 Conceptual agendas of human-nature interactions, active citizenship and therapeutic landscapes.....	350
9.3.3 Contributing to the policy context within the Scottish Government and the Forestry Commission	354
9.4 Future research directions: well-being and active environmental volunteering	357
9.4.1 Methodological issues and the advantage of longitudinal research	357
9.4.2 Investigating funding and practitioner interventions	359
9.4.3 Further research on the barriers to participation	359
Bibliography	362
Appendix 1: Questionnaire Cover Letter	379
Appendix 2: Questionnaire	380
Appendix 3: Interview Schedule	390
Appendix 4: Focus Group Schedule	392
Appendix 5: Initial Motivations Coding Tree Example	394
Appendix 6: Informed Consent Form.....	395
Appendix 7: Organisation Participant Information Sheet.....	396
Appendix 8: Individual Participant Information Sheet	397

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Database group numbers	71
Table 3.2: Questionnaire structure	73
Table 3.3: Questionnaire response rates for each council region.....	75
Table 3.4: Spectra of case study group criteria	79
Table 3.5: Case study groups.	80
Table 3.6: Group work	85
Table 4.1: Organisational roles	118
Table 4.2: Environments in which the organisations work.....	121
Table 4.3: National environmental organisation links	123
Table 4.4: National volunteering organisation links	123
Table 4.5: The number of part-time unpaid volunteers active at the organisation	126
Table 4.6: Gender response.....	127
Table 4.7: Ethnicity response	127
Table 4.8: Employment response	128
Table 4.9: Age response	128
Table 4.10: Motivations to volunteer	130
Table 4.11: Volunteer activities	132
Table 4.12: Benefits of volunteering.....	134
Table 5.1: Environmental and non-environmental initial motivations to volunteer.	157
Table 6.1: Summary of group tasks	212
Table 6.2: Summary of individual tasks	223
Table 9.1: PhD thesis themes and Scottish Government objectives and outcomes.	355

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Research design structure	66
Figure 3.2: Council divisions of Scotland.....	68
Figure 3.3: Field roles in observational fieldwork.	105
Figure 4.1: SFRP volunteers taking a break from tree planting.....	136
Figure 4.2: A wild flower meadow planted by members of CEG.	137
Figure 4.3: The annual family fun day in Southside Park.	138
Figure 4.4: Community raised allotments	139
Figure 4.5: EEV volunteers clearing pathways before digging areas for drainage.....	140
Figure 6.1: The wood ant hill beside the Scots pine tree.	205
Figure 6.2: Ripe juniper berries on the bush.	205
Figure 6.3: Volunteers arriving in the location and having lunch.....	208
Figure 6.4: Volunteers removing the top wire layer of the deer fence.	213
Figure 6.5: The spread of team work during deer fence removal.	214
Figure 6.6: Non-native sitka spruce tree felling in Glen Moriston.	215
Figure 6.7: ‘Rhodie bashing’ in practice.....	216
Figure 6.8: Path clearing and drainage ditching by FSP volunteers.	217
Figure 6.9: Bird cherry tree being removed from the nursery beds.	218
Figure 6.10: A young Scots pine after being planted.....	224
Figure 6.11: Graffiti removal and painting about to commence in Southside Park.....	227
Figure 6.12: Linda’s soil stained hand.	238
Figure 6.13: Tree hugging (and kissing) in action.	239
Figure 6.14: Some of the raised NSA vegetable beds.....	240
Figure 6.15: Before the fence was removed by the group.	243
Figure 6.16: The clear area after fence removal	244
Figure 6.17: The urban green space site for NSA.....	247
Figure 6.18: River Moriston, the location of Graham’s walk.....	249
Figure 6.19: SFRP volunteers having lunch and looking across the glen.....	250
Figure 6.20: A SFRP atunement about to begin.	251
Figure 6.21: Lichen and moss growing on rock.....	252
Figure 6.22: The view outside the remote SFRP bothy	253
Figure 6.23: Tree planting site in Glen Cannich at the beginning of a snow storm	255
Figure 6.24: The beach front. The site for a number of CEG tasks and solstice events.	256

Figure 6.25: View over Loch Ness	258
Figure 6.26: Sandmartin nesting bank.	258
Figure 6.27: Scots pine tree.....	259
Figure 6.28: FSP waterfall.....	259
Figure 8.1: Derren working on top of the rhododendron pile.	309
Figure 8.2: Larry enjoying the wind	317

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Author's Declaration

I confirm that I am author of this thesis and that I have consulted all references cited within. This thesis is a record of the work I have done and has not previously been accepted for a higher degree.

..... Stuart Muirhead

I confirm that the conditions of the relevant Ordinance and Regulations have been fulfilled in relation to this thesis.

..... Professor N.R. Fyfe

Abstract

This thesis explores the interaction between well-being and environmental volunteering. Focusing on five case study groups across Scotland, the emotional, social and physical well-being impacts of active environmental volunteer work are examined. Through an extensive ethnographic approach incorporating in-depth interviewing, participant observation and focus group work the thesis highlights the importance of studying the initial and continuing motivations for individuals to participate in environmental volunteering. This retains a particular focus on emotional and embodied volunteer experiences, exploring the importance of tasks and landscapes on the volunteering encounters. In considering the meaning of volunteering, the thesis also explores linkages of community and citizenship and how individuals frame and understand their volunteering, especially in relation to the environmental aspects of the work. This speaks directly to academic themes of embodiment, human-nature interactions, emotional geographies and social capital. The studentship was an ESRC-CASE funded project, with the CASE partner being Forestry Commission Scotland. The research takes place within a dynamic political context that encompasses current research and work on volunteering and natural environment encounters within Scotland and the UK as a whole. The thesis looks to inform ongoing policy relevant debates on environmental volunteering within both the Forestry Commission Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The thesis examines the relationship between well-being and environmental volunteering, with particular focus on the impacts on social and emotional capital. It specifically looks at aspects of emotional and social well-being that connect through the tasks and landscapes involved in active volunteering within natural environments. Funded by an ESRC-CASE studentship with Forestry Commission Scotland, the research involved in-depth field work with five case study groups in rural and urban Scotland where volunteers were engaged in active environmental activities. Using a range of methods, including participant observation, in-depth interviewing and focus groups, the research examined the embodied experiences and practices of volunteers as well as their motivations. This research takes place within a dynamic political context that encompasses current research and thinking on volunteering and natural environment encounters within Scotland and the UK as a whole. There has been academic research carried out that deals with a range of aspects of environmental volunteering and how these impact individuals. This thesis brings together areas of geographical literature on emotional and social well-being with analysis of the motivations and impacts of environmental volunteering. This complements and builds on previous academic literature relating to volunteering and contact with natural environments and takes an ethnographic approach to address aspects of emotionality and embodiment. The research probes ideas of underlying ethics and values behind volunteering motivations and how these are woven through personal and social aspects of well-being. The research builds upon the main research aims:

- To examine the links between well-being, nature and environmental volunteering
- To explore the ways in which social and emotional capital are engendered through active nature work
- To contribute to conceptual agendas of human-nature interactions, active citizenship and therapeutic landscapes
- To inform policy relevant debates within the Forestry Commission and the Scottish Government on environmental volunteering.

This opening chapter aims to outline the context in which the research for the thesis has taken place. Firstly, the emerging evidence on the relationship between natural environments and health will be examined through the scope of well-being and embodiment. Secondly, the political and research context of volunteering will be taken into consideration. This will be split to discuss the wider issue of volunteering in both Scotland and the UK, looking at specific environmental volunteering policy in Scotland and explore some recent environmental volunteering research. The chapter then moves on to examining the history and current thinking within the Forestry Commission Scotland (the CASE partner). This leads through to thinking of how the Forestry Commission has changed since its inception and how this links in with current political thinking, resulting in a change in the focus of the aims of the organisation. This helps to frame where the thesis sits amongst current thinking within Scotland and the UK on environmental volunteering. The chapter will finish by pointing towards the rest of the thesis, briefly outlining the specific research questions that have been developed from the aims given above. Finally, the focus of the coming chapters will be expanded upon.

1.1 Introducing well-being, embodiment, emotions and social capital

Growing evidence, especially in the last two decades, has begun to support the view that exposure and access to natural environments can have a wide range of positive impacts on human well-being (Ulrich 1992; Burns, 1998; Lundberg 1998; Pretty *et al.* 2004; Parr, 2005; Townsend, 2006). The use of the term well-being needs to go beyond the popularised catch-all state that has been used across a range of public, policy, popular and academic spheres (Pain and Smith, 2010: 300). Instead it needs to engage with a range of themes that have been so central in welfare and health geographies. These cover areas of psychological, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of ‘being’ in certain places and how the ‘wellness’ of an individual is linked with what they do and where they do it. It goes beyond just being well or unwell and is defined here within a particularly social and geographical understanding:

‘a condition that is once collective and contextually sensitive; that incorporates understandings about the sociality of materials and of emotions and their interweaving with the lives of individuals, communities and societies.’

(Pain and Smith, 2010: 301)

Individual well-being is therefore shaped within a wider context. Individual emotions are linked in with the circumstances in which this well-being takes place. This is often related through the physicality and placement of the body in certain places and their attachment to that space or landscape. There is a physical sense of being well but there are also emotional and social connections associated with a feeling of well-being that are experienced through active environmental volunteering. There have also been emerging discussions in the literature relating to the physical benefits of exercise in the natural outdoors and the positive relationship this has with psychological well-being (Cooper *et al.* 1999; Pretty *et*

al. 2005; Hartig 2008). Davidson and Milligan (2004) describe the emotional experiences that take place through the body as the most ‘immediate and intimately felt geography’ (ibid 2004: 523). Physically ‘being somewhere’ (Kearns and Andrews 2010: 309) is shown here as having an embodied influence on the well-being that can be associated with a particular experience. Embodiment is a concept that assumes the experiences of the individual are shaped by the active and reactive entity that is their body (Parr, 2005). As important as the physical bodily experiences are, however, the body is not to be understood as solely a vehicle for physicality and touch. The body is, instead, where sense is made of the world through practice and performance (Wylie, 2007). Understanding the cultural, symbolic and emotional nature of bodily interactions comes to prominence when relating these to the particularly physical nature of volunteering in natural environments. This raises a number of questions for this thesis:

- What embodied encounters take place within environmental volunteering?
- How do volunteers relate their own physical and emotional well-being to their volunteering?
- What linkages are there between these embodied experiences and the wider social and community aspects of the volunteers’ lives?

These final two questions deal directly with aspects of social capital and emotional well-being. Putnam (1995) defines social capital as ‘features of social life - networks, norms and trust - that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives’ (Putnam, 1995: 665). This can be viewed as having a particular set of beneficial effects:

‘Social capital is alleged to have beneficial effects on both individuals (promoting better health, social interaction; increasing the probability of successful job search; providing a favourable climate for entrepreneurship) and communities (generally, stimulating

economic development by making certain resources available that otherwise would be lacking (e.g., microcredit schemes or sharing of capital equipment)).'

(Mohan and Mohan, 2002: 193)

This definition and set of benefits include the economic feature of the positive contribution of social capital. However, this thesis will retain a stronger focus on the aspects of the individual regarding health and well-being and social interaction, as well as the general impacts that social capital has on volunteer groups and the community. This idea of social capital being positively accrued through volunteer participation is not as simple as presented here:

'Putnam therefore draws our attention to the point that membership of voluntary organizations does not produce "good" social capital per se. Indeed, Putnam notes that although membership of voluntary groups may have increased in recent years, such membership is based more on checkbook activism than it is on people "getting their hands dirty" through active participation.'

(Roberts and Devine, 2004: 284)

The 'type' and scope of participation with voluntary organisations is therefore important. The presence of inactive members of groups who give only monetary help to the group would not result in the same effects on social capital. This thesis specifically looks at environmental volunteering that entails some form of physical and embodied participation, often involving people who literally 'get their hands dirty' in natural environments. This type of active involvement produces connections with the spaces of the work and fellow volunteers that makes it distinct from the more passive forms of group membership and participation.

The literature has also started to demonstrate that specifically natural environments may be able to provide a therapeutic experience (Gesler, 1992; Williams, 1999; Kearns and Moon, 2002; Conradson, 2005a).

‘All this fresh air and exercise is undoubtedly good for the physical, mental and spiritual health of the population; enjoyment of the outdoors can be a ‘safety valve’ releasing the pressures of daily life.’

(Warren, 2002: 229)

Warren (2002) is discussing the benefits of outdoor recreation and linking the contacts this engenders to the ability to escape the pressures and stresses of everyday life. The debate goes beyond just ‘being’ in a specific environment, however, and also focuses on the ways in which this environment is experienced and engaged with (Thrift, 1998). This literature suggests that the combination of being in a natural environment and interacting with this environment in a specific way may be beneficial to an individual’s physical and emotional well-being. Emotional geography helps to bridge these embodied experiences within particular landscapes by examining the association between feelings themselves and the representations and accounts of these feelings that are experienced through the body and within particular spaces (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). The thesis thus contributes to wider debates on the need to understand ‘different kinds of “doings”’ and to value ‘everyday interactions, practices and feelings’ as key elements in diverse socio-spatial practices which might fall under a broad heading of social participation (Jupp, 2008: 341).

In relation to well-being, thinking through emotional geographies is used in this thesis to explore the way in which individuals experience aspects of volunteering in natural environments and also in related volunteer activity, be it committee meetings or administration work. It is the combination of all these activities that contribute to the full

experience and inhabit the ‘being’ and ‘doing’ involved in the volunteering. The interactions between the debates around embodiment, therapeutic landscapes and emotional encounters are explored through the thesis. These debates and linkages will explore these issues of embodied and therapeutic landscape experience and their impacts on well-being. By situating its analysis in this context, the thesis contributes to expanding understandings of the geographies of volunteering to incorporate situated, embodied and emotional practices of voluntary action.

The following sections will trace the development of policy within Scotland and the UK that relates to the issues around both volunteering generally and environmental volunteering specifically. Initially, these may seem to be disparate from the discussion above in terms of how they are discussed. However, as will be demonstrated, there has been a movement in the public sector and government towards being not only interested in volunteering and the impacts that this activity has on society, but also on the personal and social well-being impacts of this activity on the individual.

1.2 Volunteering and policy

This section will look across aspects of general volunteering and participation in Scotland and the UK. This will be used to understand the political environment in which the thesis has taken place. The specific Scottish policy perspective on environmental volunteering will be used to show the current political approach in Scotland and show where the thesis fits in terms of current Scottish policy. This will be taken a step further by briefly looking at three recent environmental volunteer studies in the UK. The particular contribution of this thesis is then discussed by explaining how these studies can be expanded upon and taken further.

1.2.1 Volunteering in Scotland and the UK

Volunteering is increasingly finding itself at the forefront of both organisational and political developments across a wide range of areas. This is highlighted by the Volunteering Strategy for Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2004) that outlines the need to embed a robust culture of volunteering in Scotland. The strategy set out roles and responsibilities and outlines work to be taken forward between 2004 and 2009 to achieve this aim. The definition used for volunteering in the Strategy was:

‘the giving of time and energy through a third party, which can bring measurable benefits to the volunteer, individual beneficiaries, groups and organisations, communities, environment, and society at large. It is a choice undertaken of one’s own free will, and is not motivated primarily for financial gain or for a wage or salary.’

(Scottish Executive, 2004: 7)

This is the working definition used for the form of volunteering that is discussed in this thesis. The most recent figures on volunteer numbers in Scotland are from the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) in 2009. The SHS data (Scottish Executive, 2009) shows that 28% of survey participants stated they had volunteered formally in the past 12 months, slightly down on the 31% during the 2007-2008 period. This mirrors a similar slight drop in measured participation rates for formal volunteering in England and Wales over the same period. In monetary terms, the annual economic value of volunteering in Scotland for 2009 is estimated at £2.1 billion (Scottish Executive, 2009). The high numbers that are engaged in some form of volunteering activity in Scotland is reflected in both political and academic interest in volunteering in Scotland and beyond.

One framing of volunteering within geographic writing has been that of voluntary organisations and their relationship to the state. This has been partly because of an ‘evidence of increasing state-initiated moves to develop the role and responsibilities of voluntary associations’ (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003: 2069). There is a strong critique of the association between the state and voluntary associations, focusing on the concern that a state support for voluntarism may be rooted in a concern for tax reduction and an attempt from the state to try and ‘divest itself of certain welfare services’ (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003: 2070). Wolch (1989; 1990) takes this further by stating that this could produce a ‘shadow state’. In this she asserts that there is a possibility that the state could be formally and informally controlling public welfare services. This is carried out directly through public sector provision, but also indirectly through voluntary sector organisations that are supported by state grants and contracts. There has also been discussion around voluntarism and citizenship (Marston and Staeheli, 1994; and Painter and Philo, 1995) and how these terms converge around a political identity of entitlements and obligations. The discussions have converged around how citizenship can now be viewed as more than just a political set of rights but go beyond that to looking at how other locations and organisations (including voluntary) can encounter citizenship (Brown, 1997). The thesis examines these geographical interactions with voluntarism and citizenship but goes beyond the ‘voluntarism’ to looking at the ‘volunteering’. The focus will therefore be on not the framing of the organisational situation, but on the experiences that the volunteers have through their active environmental volunteering activities.

As well as the academic geographies of volunteering research and the political focus on volunteering in Scotland, the Commission on the Future of Volunteering was established by the England Volunteering Development Council to develop a vision to integrate volunteering into English society. This was put into context after following on from the International Year of Volunteers in 2001 and the proposed European Year of Volunteering

in 2011. This highlighted the focus that had been put on volunteering over the last fifteen years, specifically since Prime Minister John Major's 'Make a Difference' Initiative in 1994 (The Commission of the Future of Volunteering, 2008: 3).

In the 1980s and early to mid 1990s the British Conservative Government was discussing ideas of citizenship and the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen (Lund, 2008). Between 1997 and 2010, a number of New Labour ministers then moved towards talking about volunteering under a number of guises. They began to use the terms 'community cohesion' (Worley, 2005) and 'active community' (Mooney and Fyfe, 2006). This is a move from volunteering being viewed as being a responsibility, to it being viewed as a way of 'promoting voluntary action as a means of empowering local communities' (Mooney and Fyfe, 2006: 137). The most recent volunteering development by the British Government concerns Prime Minister David Cameron's ideas around developing a 'Big Society' (Cabinet Office, 2010). This contains the pledge that:

'We will take a range of measures to encourage volunteering and involvement in social action, including launching a national 'Big Society Day' and making regular community involvement a key element of civil service staff appraisals.'

(Cabinet Office, 2010: 2)

This is part of a wider range of policies being implemented by the British Conservative led coalition government around community, active participation and transferring power from national to local government. This also highlights the 'We are all in this together' (ibid, 2010: 1) philosophy that is being used by the government during a time of recession, suggesting a national bond between citizens in the UK. The research was conducted prior to the Conservative led coalition Government coming into power in 2010. The influences of this change of government are touched upon here but are not discussed within the

empirical chapters. This raises the question for the thesis of how this politically led thinking on national citizenship transfers into the mindset of the volunteers. This involves looking at the complex initial and continued motivations of the volunteers and examining the values that volunteers place upon their work. This will take the debate beyond the politicised context, to one that is more personal and valued by the volunteers themselves.

1.2.2 The current Scottish policy perspective on environmental volunteering

The starting point for understanding the current status of environmental volunteering policy in Scotland is the Dalglish Report (2006). This commissioned by the Scottish Executive (as it was then known) to examine the potential for environmental volunteering to deliver Scottish Executive policy on promoting the Scottish voluntary sector and building stronger links between this sector and policy areas. This paper understood volunteering under the background of the Scottish Executive Volunteering Strategy (2004) which looked to broadly promote the role of the voluntary sector in Scottish life. What the Dalglish Report sought to achieve is identifying and building on that which is particularly unique about environmental volunteering:

'Environmental volunteering covers the engagement of volunteers to achieve environmental gains. The motivation of the volunteers is sometimes a wish to contribute to the improvement of the environment, but can also relate to individual development, to health or to social benefits, either to the community or to the individual. Like other types of volunteering, it can be a mechanism for acquiring new skills, including social and citizenship skills and can offer a variety of hands on work experience as a stepping stone in a career pathway... Environmental volunteering is capable of service delivery in a variety of areas. It contributes to building stronger communities and to community cohesion, it

can assist in developing policy thinking and it can operate as an agent of change in society. It has unique characteristics and can deliver benefits in a variety of areas.'

(Dalglish, 2006: 6-7)

This quote reflects the focus of the thesis around areas of volunteer motivations and health and social impacts relevant to both individuals and communities. Indeed, it is the relationship between the 'characteristics' of volunteering and their ability to 'deliver benefits' that is the frame of the thesis. The report also highlights that there is 'scarcely any relevant research in this area' (ibid: 8). Dalglish sees this lack of research as a particular problem when it is understood that environmental volunteering can be seen as being able to deliver a positive outcome to almost every aspect of the 'people agenda' (ibid: 10). This 'people agenda' involves government policy contributing towards a range of issues including health, education, skills, equalities, employability, youth, older people, citizenship and nationhood. The thesis reflects this by moving from talking about volunteering and the voluntary sector, to looking at the volunteers themselves, looking at their motivations and the effects that volunteering has on their well-being as well as wider social capital implications. This extends the understanding of these themes beyond those commonly focused on in policy analysis such as service delivery or social inclusion (Horton and Kraftl, 2009). The thesis aims to give the volunteer experience the central role (Roberts and Devine, 2004) and to show that these experiences in themselves (and not just their societal contributions) have implications for individual and community well-being. This is most clearly shown when examining how the thesis will move forward from similar environmental volunteering studies that have been carried out in the UK.

1.2.3 Environmental volunteering research and key contributions of the thesis

In addition to the Dalglish Report (2006) there have been three large studies in the UK that deal directly with environmental volunteering. The first was conducted by the Institute of Volunteering Research (IVR) in England. This study aimed ‘to explore the nature and impact of volunteering within environmental organisations in the South West of England’ (Russell, 2009: 4). This was carried out through stakeholder interviews, an online survey of current volunteers, five focus groups and a telephone survey of volunteer involving organisations. This study identified a range of positive impacts on those who did volunteer and also a number of barriers for those who did not. The benefits included feelings of satisfaction, enjoyment and a sense of achievement. The main barriers mentioned were a lack of time, money, interest and stigmas attached to the perception and stereotyping of volunteers. They also highlight the variable nature of the volunteering, depending on initial volunteer motivations and expectations and how these can change over time.

The second and third studies were conducted by O’Brien *et al.* (2008, 2010) for Forest Research Scotland, the research branch of the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS). These studies were designed to explore the motivations for, benefits of, and barriers to outdoor environmental volunteering. A similar strategy to that of Russell (2009) was also employed. This included a literature review, interviews with representatives at a national level of organisations, as well as with local representatives that manage volunteers. Further interviews were also conducted with volunteers as they undertook their voluntary activities. Again, a whole range of social, personal and environmental motivations and benefits were identified in these studies. These motivations were split across four areas; environmental awareness and appreciation, training and skills, activity, and personal contact and encouragement. The benefits are numerous but are listed in terms of benefits to the environment, to the organisation, to the community and society in general and also to

the individuals and their personal well-being. This thesis engages with many of the themes involved in the Russell (2009) and O' Brien *et al.* (2008; 2010) studies and builds on them by approaching the research in a number of ways.

This thesis looks at not only the impacts of active environmental volunteering, but looks at the reasons individuals experience these impacts, going beyond voluntarism and the organisation, to volunteer motivations and experience. This is to begin to look at the 'doing' of volunteering that was highlighted by Jupp (2008). This includes understanding how certain benefits are felt, but also why the individuals feel and react to their volunteering in certain ways. There is an exploration of motivations and positive/negative impacts that have to be appreciated through underlying values and ethics.

To build on understanding the volunteer motivations, both environmental and non-environmental motivations are examined, developing a stronger understanding of what is distinctive about environmental volunteering. This helps to break down particular volunteer values and access debates on why individuals become involved. In the thesis, these motivations are also considered at a range of scales, building on the need to identify at what levels individuals engage with their volunteering. This considers whether the attachment is at a local scale, or for a particular issue, or whether the volunteer holds wider geographical, or indeed temporal, motivations. This links into wider political and ethical agendas that go further than the previous studies and explore a range of volunteer connections within and beyond the volunteer groups. This enables the thesis to build upon these areas by particularly focusing on the connections that builds social capital and cohesion, either within particular groups, or at a wider community level. The strength is therefore in being able to look across individuals, groups and community linkages that weave their way through notions of well-being.

The thesis was also undertaken over an extended period of time with both the case study groups and individuals. This was in part to tackle one of the limitations of the O'Brien *et al.* (2010) study that: 'People's emotional state might have been more positive than normal at the beginning of their activities particularly if they looked forward to their day out volunteering.' (ibid: 535). It was important to capture not just these fleeting and momentary experiences (those of the actual practical task) but also those that may be viewed as more mundane or routine aspects of the volunteering, such as group and committee meetings. The 'active' and physical volunteering tasks are therefore considered in tandem with those other tasks that are essential to the running of the volunteer group. The question also needs to be answered on how these experiences filter in to a volunteer's everyday life. Indeed, what this thesis does is examine how volunteers interpret their volunteering and link it to this everyday life. It is important to go beyond just what could be seen as volunteering benefits and also capture possibilities of negative impacts or friction that occur within the group or among the wider community. The thesis is therefore going beyond exploring just the volunteer tasks, but also the emotional, physical and social context in which these tasks are taking place. To capture these aspects, the core of the research involved working with five environmental volunteering groups across Scotland over a period of fourteen months.

The methodology involves participant observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group work. The approach provides an opportunity to understand volunteering in a number of ways. This can be through the embodied encounter of the task, including the physical nature of the work and the connection individuals feel with particular spaces and places, looking at the relationship between the volunteers and the physical and embodied encounters they have with certain landscapes. This particularly interacts with the possibility of natural landscapes and 'being' in nature as having the ability to encourage a therapeutic experience (Gesler, 1992; Kearns and Moon, 2002), putting nature and

landscape at the centre of the experience. It also gives scope to examine the social and emotional capital that can be engendered through a wider involvement in the group. The research questions probe ideas of underlying ethics and values behind volunteering motivations and how these are woven through personal and social aspects of well-being. This ethnographic strategy was designed to build complementary methods that would be able to unravel and reveal the volunteer experiences and begin to unpick the different ways of 'knowing' that are involved in embodiment and emotionality (Davies and Dwyer, 2007).

1.3 Forestry Commission Scotland: from productivism to nature and well-being

These geographical interactions and the aims of the thesis have been reflected in the developing interests of the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS). This approach to studying environmental volunteering, as well as the other studies described above, reflect the change in approach that organisations such as the FCS have gone through in terms of their organisational remit and philosophy. The thesis is a joint ESRC-CASE funded studentship, with the FCS being the CASE partner. To understand this change in thinking, the history of the FCS will be examined.

The FCS has a changing remit that will be explained below, which moves from a sole interest in productivist notions of timber production, to a more 'people friendly approach'. They are now looking to find ways of encouraging people on to their land (volunteering being a part of this), as well as producing evidence of how these activities can enhance health and well-being. The FCS is a non-ministerial government department that is responsible for forestry in Scotland. Forestry is now an issue devolved to the Scottish Parliament so the FCS works closely with Scottish Government policy to deliver its remit. This is a remit that has morphed since the Commission's inception almost a century ago. The Forestry Commission's origins are in the First World War, and the difficulties Britain

had in meeting wartime demands on timber. Woodland resources had been declining since the middle ages through the pressure put on forestry by increasing population growth, but this reached an all time low in the wake of the industrial revolution. With the outbreak of war the country was no longer able to rely on timber imports, and in July 1916 Minister Herbert Asquith appointed the Acland Committee to look at the best ways of developing woodland resources. They recommended a state organisation the most effective way of co-ordinating a reafforestation plan to meet timber needs for the foreseeable future. On 1 September 1919 the Forestry Act was put in place (Forestry Commission, 2010). This set up the Forestry Commission and gave it responsibility for woods in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The focus was therefore on fast growing, hardy trees that could grow well in this climate. The Second World War and its aftermath had a major impact on forestry. During the War, Commission forests produced more than 51 million cubic feet of wood. The beginnings of the Commission were therefore solely focussed on the production of timber.

The 1960s were years of consolidation in production and also expansion. A mechanical revolution took place and technical progress allowed planting on previously unplatable land. At the same time as this and for the first time in the history of the Commission, an awareness of public access and recreation needs grew, along with landscape and conservation considerations. Dame Sylvia Crowe was appointed as the Commission's first Landscape Consultant, and the public were given a 'right to roam' in Commission forests. From the 1970s, conservation and amenity issues became more central in the Commission's planning and forestry policy. Emphasis was increasingly given to maintaining woodland character and recognising the importance of broadleaves, as opposed to the pine trees that had been planted so extensively in plantations across the country. Following the advice of Dame Sylvia Crowe, landscaping began to be considered on a far wider scale, resulting in woods which were aesthetically pleasing as well as

productive. Forests were identified as important wildlife reserves, and conservation became a special responsibility of Commission staff. Facilities for recreation developed steadily, especially after a consultants' report highlighted the suitability of many sites for holiday accommodation. A Forest Cabins Branch was formed and new cabins built, encouraging people to spend time within the forests. This was the first interaction between the Commission and encouraging people to spend time on their land.

Environmental issues came to the fore in the 1980s, with the Commission's management policies, and particularly forestry's apparent lack of environmental awareness, receiving heavy criticism. As problems were addressed, and the Commission became adept at putting across its message, a number of critics became more supportive. By the 1990s the Commission was committed to multi-purpose forestry.

'The emphasis, as we know, is no longer purely on output and production, but on the multi-purpose forestry that responds to demands for amenity and recreation requirements, the better understanding and aspirations for nature conservation and landscape improvement.'

(Foot, 2003: 190)

As the quotation shows, environmental concerns were now at the fore of the Commission's aims and forest officers were working closely with conservation groups. Wildlife projects underway included help for threatened species such as the red squirrel and nightjar. This change can be situated within a wider frame of changing in thinking around European landscapes. This change in thinking and policy drive within the Commission is reflecting a change in wider society (Sointu, 2005).

'Institutional change in forestry is part of a wider picture of institutional change in the countryside... Since the debate about what and who the countryside is for goes beyond forestry, the issues raised here are also relevant to other institutions of the society/environment relationship. The British re-negotiation of what and who forestry is for should therefore be seen as part of a wider European context of a renegotiation of what and whom the European countryside is for.'

(Schiellerup, 2008: 1062)

The interest given to what and who the FCS exists for is therefore not only limited to Scotland or the UK. The debate has been occurring on a wider scale and has influenced political approaches regarding the access to forestry. In the UK, the post-1997 Labour Government's social agenda, emphasising social inclusion (Fairclough, 2000), was a further opportunity to demonstrate the value of the work of the organisation. This also sparked the engagement in urban and community forestry. The FCS has moved from a productivist, timber producing organisation to one that now encourages people to use their land. This is shown in their support for the O'Brien *et al.* (2008 and 2010) studies that were discussed above, as well as this thesis. This is also reflected in the Scottish Forestry Strategy (2006) and a number of recent FCS policy documents that are linked to the Scottish Government's strategic aims and objectives.

The latest Scottish Forestry Strategy (following up from a previous publication in 2000) defines the new focus of the organisation. Within the four principles of the strategy are the words 'sustainable', 'social inclusion', 'communities' and 'people'.

'By the second half of this century, people are benefiting widely from Scotland's trees, woodlands and forests, actively engaging with and looking after them for the use and

enjoyment of generations to come. The forestry resource has become a central part of our culture, economy and environment.

- *Sustainable development – underpinned by sustainable forest management.*
- *Social inclusion - through helping to provide opportunities for all, and helping to build stronger communities.*
- *Forestry for and with people.*
- *Integration with other land uses and businesses.’*

(Scottish Executive, Scottish Forestry Strategy Vision and Principles, 2006: 8)

This highlights how the Scottish Executive viewed the role of recreational and accessible forestry at the end of the twentieth century, as being an integrated resource with people at the heart of future planning. This linkage between people and place is further highlighted by the Woods for Health FCS publication (2009). This document integrates FCS policy with overall Scottish Government objectives.

‘The Scottish Government’s implementation plan Good Places, Better Health aims to ensure greater connections between environment and health policy. As the forestry directorate of the Scottish Government, advising on and implementing forestry policy and managing the national forest estate, Forestry Commission Scotland has a key role to play in helping to achieve this aim.’

(FCS, Woods for Health, 2009:4)

Forestry policy is being recognised as being able to provide an opportunity to improve national health standards through managing the national forest estate appropriately. To focus this discussion on particularly environmental volunteering the FCS published a paper on Volunteering on the National Forest Estate (2008). This paper looks at ten case studies

of groups that work on FCS land and examines the impacts of this particular form of volunteering, while linking it back to the aims of the Forestry Strategy:

‘One of the main aims of the government’s Scottish Forestry Strategy is that woodlands should ‘contribute to improving the health and well-being of people and their communities’. Volunteering helps to achieve this. It introduces people to the woods around them. It teaches skills useful in developing a career in the outdoors, or in other aspects of their lives. It improves health and fitness, and can instill self confidence. And it brings people together in a good working relationship.’

(FCS, Volunteering on the National Forest Estate, 2008: 4)

The health and well-being impacts that are listed in the quote are already being highlighted as possible benefits of volunteer engagement with forestry (benefits of acquiring skills, improving health and fitness and instilling self confidence). However, what is also required here is a more nuanced understanding of how these impacts are experienced and whether these experiences are particularly unique to environmental volunteering or whether they could be attributed to any form of volunteering. The thesis examines how environmental volunteers in particular engage with these notions of volunteering and explore particular values and ethics that the individuals hold that differentiate environmental volunteering. What is the added impact of this contact with natural environments and in what way does active environmental volunteering contribute to that? Can these spaces be considered as being particularly ‘therapeutic’ and how is this altered or built upon by the ways in which volunteers encounter these places? This involves looking at individual volunteers and their emotional and embodied involvement in the tasks that they carry out, but also exploring the social relationships they build with other volunteers.

It should be emphasised here that although all the case study groups in this thesis work in natural environments, not all of the groups work solely on FCS land. However, they do all involve themselves to varying extents with tasks pertaining to trees or woodland. This focus on the history, thinking and current stance of the FCS is to highlight the Forestry Commissions institutional interest in the themes and outcomes of this thesis, while at the same time highlighting where the research will fit amongst current Scottish Government policy but also challenge aspects of the current thinking by taking the approach to volunteering beyond just a organisational level and framing it within a more complex of individual well-being.

'We have to think of the future. We have to take into account our need for farm land and recreation, the demands of urban and industrial development, and our emotional desires.'

(Forestry Commission, 1998: 20)

This quotation from a Forestry Commission publication on native woodlands reflects the change in thinking that has been shown in the last decade, within the Commission and further afield. There is an emphasis on not only land management but also the human element involved in how this land is used and viewed. This is moving from a more simplistic access to the land, to how humans interact and are attached to these places. This links to a wider epistemological approach of governments at this time that were putting the 'people agenda' (Dalglish, 2006: 10) more central within approaches to policy.

Volunteering has been used by governments as an ideal way in which individuals can take responsibility for their own health and well-being. It can be noted that 'voluntary associations appear to be increasingly identified in policy and academic discourses as a 'panacea' to many of the problems faced by neoliberal states' (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003: 398). This links in with the same thinking on well-being:

'the rise of wellbeing has an inescapable politics, and this is very often tied to the neoliberal agendas of European governments who are keen to assign more responsibility for welfare to individuals'

(Pain and Smith, 2010: 299)

Therefore, this rise in interest in notions of voluntarism, rooted in the neoliberal agenda, is also linked in with the rise in political interest in the notion of well-being. This is putting the focus away from the state and back to the responsibility of the citizen. The emphasis is being placed on the individual (either as a single entity or as part of a group) to take responsibility for their own health and well-being and take part in wider society (through taking part in volunteer activity). The thesis examines how these ideas interact by looking at ideas of citizenship and ecological citizenship, and the ways in which volunteers (dis)engage with these terms. There is an examination of linking notions of active and ecological citizenship and the levels at which volunteers are prepared to connect with the political underpinnings behind these terms. This involves exploring the supporting ethics and values behind the volunteering. There is also an examination of how volunteers approach their own well-being and whether they view this with the same importance as they do the environmental contribution that they are making. The thesis also specifically looks at how the character of the volunteering is changed by involving 'nature'. The distinctiveness of motivations and values that may find themselves rooted in environmental and ecological ethics makes it especially complex when considering how individuals engage with political agendas and terms such as citizenship. The thesis pulls out these nature relations at both individual and community levels.

1.4 Research questions and thesis structure

The research aims that were outlined at the start of this chapter have been built upon to form specific research questions. These questions are more direct in the specifics of how environmental volunteering is explored. They take the essence of the aims and apply them to being able to ask specific questions within the research. The four research questions that emerge from this and frame the thesis are:

- 1) What are the initial and continuing motivations for individuals to participate in environmental volunteering?

This question looks at the reasons that volunteers give for taking part in the volunteering. This means examining not only the motivations to become involved with a volunteer group, but also what prompts a volunteer to continue with a group. This aims to reveal the expectation that volunteers had at the beginning of their volunteering journey and also examine how this changes and informs their continued involvement.

- 2) What kinds of environmental volunteering work enables well-being and social capital?

This question deals with the specific tasks and locations of the volunteer work and how carrying out these activities can affect aspects of emotional, physical and social well-being. This raises the question of how *environmental* volunteering is distinct from other forms of volunteering and also how the group nature of the work can influence the building of social networks.

- 3) What are the emotional well-being and nature relations at both an individual and community level?

This question more openly considers the relationship between natural environments and emotional well-being. This investigates not only how this operates within the individual volunteer, but also how this may take place on the level of interaction with the wider community.

- 4) How are these relations engendered in terms of well-being through specifically 'active' environmental volunteer work?

The final research question will examine the importance of the *active* nature of the volunteer work. This will discuss the importance of physicality and embodiment to the volunteer tasks. This explores questions relating to how individuals experience their volunteering through the site of the body and the value that they put on this contact.

The following literature review chapter delves more deeply into much of the literature that has been discussed above, with a stronger focus on geographical and academic literature relating to the themes of well-being and nature connections. The rest of the thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology. This covers the initial construction of an environmental volunteering organisation database in Scotland, the sending out of postal questionnaires to these organisations and, consequently, process of selecting and working with the case study groups. The core of this chapter will address the ethnographic approach that was taken with the groups. This will explain the analytical strategy and explore issues around ethics, positionality, performance and consent. The chapter finishes by considering

the embodied environmental ethics involved in research practice, as well as a further reflection on the studentship being funded by the ESRC and Forestry Commission Scotland.

Chapter 4 will set the organisational context of the case study groups. This draws on evidence from the postal questionnaires and introduces the case study groups within the wider volunteering landscape. The organisations are examined through their histories, vision and internal demographics, as well as their inception and how they are structured. Where appropriate, the case study group features are compared to the findings of the postal questionnaire.

Chapter 5 explores the initial and continuing motivations for individuals to become involved in environmental volunteering. It examines both general and specifically environmental motivations that cover a whole range of personal and social aspects of well-being and draws on the findings from the ethnographic work with active environmental volunteers. These motivations take into account themes such as social factors and community, and landscape and place. Chapter 5 deals specifically with the first research question on the initial and continuing motivations for individuals to participate in environmental volunteering.

Chapter 6 begins to look at the volunteering experience. This starts from the arrival encounters of the volunteers, and active volunteering is discussed through the varying tasks and landscapes in which the environmental volunteering takes place. The arrival includes an individual's arrival to the group, but also their arrival in the volunteering landscape. The chapter then goes on to describe particular individual and group volunteering tasks to frame the nature of active environmental volunteering tasks that were taking place. Themes are then brought out from this which feed into answering the second, third and fourth

research questions. Notions of emotionality, physicality, embodiment and sociability are linked through various lenses of well-being with the aim of understanding what kinds of environmental volunteer work enable well-being.

Chapter 7 examines aspects of community, social networks and volunteer identifications with notions of citizenship. This discusses blurred boundaries of community across differing levels of space and time, focussing on how volunteers view and value their own work. This particularly deals with ideas of social capital and community linkages that are engendered through the volunteering activity and contributes to the second and third research questions involving social capital and community.

Chapter 8 specifically looks at issues of physical and emotional well-being that are distinctive within active environmental volunteering. This is split into sections on physical and embodied notions of well-being, spiritual and emotional well-being, social well-being, collective identity and the influence of perceived therapeutic landscapes on well-being. The chapter also looks at issues around contested spaces and the need for groups to be resilient. This feeds in to answering the second, third and fourth research questions that relate to a number of aspects of well-being and active environmental volunteering.

The thesis ends, in Chapter 9, with a discussion on the implications the research has on current thinking on environmental volunteering. The chapter highlights the evidence that has been produced throughout the thesis, identifying a series of conclusions that reinforce the understanding of environmental volunteering through this methodological approach. The discussions at the end are ordered into five areas: methodological issues; social and emotional capital and active nature work; human-nature interactions, active citizenship and therapeutic landscapes; contributions to the policy context of the Scottish Government and the FCS; and future research possibilities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review will aim to provide grounding in the various themes that are covered in the rest of the thesis. These will retain a particular focus on the literature that contributes to answering the overall research questions that were outlined in Chapter 1. Although not following these questions in order the rest of the chapter will use key writings to discuss and explore the topics within the questions. This will begin by framing volunteering within writings on citizenship in Sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.3. This will examine the political context of active citizenship and active communities and then begin to focus in on a more specific form of ecological citizenship that may be more closely applied to environmental volunteering values. This will lead on to a discussion in Section 2.2.4 on the motivational literature that has been documented within volunteering. This first section will particularly address the first research question on initial and continued motivations to volunteer.

Section 2.3 will discuss emotional, physical and social well-being. This will define the term ‘well-being’ and go on to use geographical literature on emotions, embodiment, and community and social capital to reveal how these debates are central in understanding the environmental volunteering experience. These literature connections cross over the final three research questions by examining how all these debates impact notions of well-being.

Section 2.4 is on landscapes, nature and emotion and looks at how geographical and therapeutic landscape literature that will be used to frame these themes within environmental volunteering and the context of this thesis. Again, this section talks across the final three research questions as it is connecting the importance of both the inner and

outer volunteer environment. The focus is both on the physical places and spaces of the volunteering, but also on how these are experienced and given meaning by individual volunteers.

2.2 Volunteering and citizenship

2.2.1 Understanding the interplay between volunteering and citizenship

The traditional view of citizenship is one related to national identity. This links an individual's membership in a polity with both the rights and duties of particular practices. The activeness of an individual in these practices therefore impacts upon his or her status and inclusion as a citizen (Isin and Wood, 1999). However, the 'new geography of citizenship' has highlighted that citizenship can take place on a number of different scales, not just the national.

'the weakening of former national identities and the emergence of new identities, especially the dissolution of a kind of membership known as "citizenship" in the abstract meaning of membership in territorially defined, state-governed society and its replacement by an identity based on "primordial loyalties", ethnicity, "race", local community, language and other culturally concrete forms.'

(Friedman, 1989: 61-62)

Friedman (1989) is showing that other forms of 'membership' are as important as a national identity, those that cover other forms of cultural and social loyalty. This goes beyond a simple understanding of national citizenship and associates feelings of identity and connection with a wider range of connections. Political forms of citizenship relating to a person's relationship to an overarching political body (Painter and Philo, 1995) are to be

distinguished from socio-cultural forms of citizenship linking to questions of an individual's everyday participation/being in a community.

Many western governments have responded to globalisation by moving towards the more conservative right (Marston and Mitchell, 2003) and encouraging citizen participation in the running of the state. This contributes to the government encouraging active citizenship and participation (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003).

'one kind of "active citizenship" is about extracting obligations – requiring friends and relatives to provide caring services that were once extended by the state, expecting citizens to volunteer time and expertise to run operations previously staffed by local governments'

(Kearns, 1992: 21)

'Citizenship can be described as both a set of practices (cultural, symbolic and economic) and a bundle of rights and duties (civil, political and social) that define an individual's membership in a polity'

(Isin and Wood, 1999: 4)

Citizenship can therefore be viewed as both the rights and responsibilities of an individual but also how they then practice these. Some of these practices may be within the form of 'active citizenship' that Kearns outlines above, one that fulfils the duties that local governments had previously filled. But these sets of practices, within the understanding of citizenship, can encompass a whole range of differently motivated actions (as shown by Isin and Wood, 1999) that are underpinned by not just the political sphere but also the socio-cultural inspirations of those giving their time. This is where this thesis focuses in terms of citizenship. There is a step from looking at national and state-based definitions of citizenship, to looking at forms that are more flexible and rooted in individual motivations

and ethics that are connected to actions and values. This begins to examine the connections between voluntarism and citizenship in the geographical literature (Marston and Staeheli, 1994; Painter and Philo, 1995). This examines the differing ways in which voluntary organisations can encounter citizenship, taking it away from solely politically driven obligations and duties. To understand active citizenship more fully the past usage of this term and what it may mean for environmental volunteering is discussed below.

2.2.2 Active citizenship and active communities

This section is being used to frame ideas around the idea of rights and responsibilities that can be related to volunteering. The term of active citizenship that is being used here is initially understood through the usage of it by the British Conservative Government through the 1980s and much of the 1990s. This involved a call for ‘individual citizens to recognise their moral responsibilities to care and provide for their needy neighbours, and to meet their obligations to give of their talents and skills in the management of public and welfare services’ (Kearns, 1992: 20). In 1988, Home Office Minister John Patten called for individuals to commit in social terms: ‘I produce and consume, therefore I have a moral duty to care and provide.’ (Patten, 1988, in Kearns, 1992: 21). The emphasis here was on the responsibility of the individual as a citizen, as opposed to the rights that a citizen has as a member of a polity. It was not until the Citizen’s Charter of 1991 that these rights were partly addressed by then Prime Minister John Major (Lund, 2008: 49). Even then, the Charter was more concerned with issues around providing public services and consumerism than a guideline on the rights of a citizen, focusing on the individual and not the community. It is the way in which active citizenship was presented and conceived by the Conservative Government that opens it up as a term and understanding that may be problematic within environmental volunteering. The Government could be viewed as pushing values on individuals, with these values being perceived as imposed from above.

There seemed to be little space for individual expression or resistance. This model of active citizenship was therefore ill-equipped to fully address and understand volunteers' interactions with citizenship as a whole. Staeheli (2008) writes that 'it becomes important to consider the moral, ethical and pragmatic aspects of the relationship between citizenship and community' (Staeheli, 2008: 12). There is an 'ethopolitics' (Rose, N, 2000)¹ or an 'ethogeography' (Staeheli, 2008) that can be seen in efforts to mobilise an ethic of care (by the state or by voluntary groups).

'an ethopolitics of care is often linked with an ethogeography in which local, place-based communities are heralded as the sites in which dialogue, mutual recognition, and respect can be nurtured'

(Staeheli, 2008:13)

There is therefore a level of community and an understanding of citizenship that needs to be acknowledged that works on an ethical and place-based level and not just the responsibility to serve as a citizen of the state. This has been placed politically through the dialogue around active communities.

More recently the New Labour Government has placed community within the policy arena and a central part of that is 'active communities'. This is 'part of a wider political project that is focused on promoting voluntary action as a means of empowering local communities to take responsibility for their welfare' (Mooney and Fyfe, 2006: 137). This movement is strongly informed by the works of Robert Putnam on social capital (Putnam, 1993; 2000). The idea of building social capital is vital in understanding how New Labour viewed neighbourhood regeneration and community cohesion (Worley, 2005). However, Mooney and Fyfe demonstrate in their example of a Glasgow community campaigning

¹ This reference is for Nikolas Rose. The references that do not have the initial refer to work by Gillian Rose.

against a local pool closure that there are both *good* and *bad* active communities. This means that there are forms of community action that are encouraged by governing bodies but there are also those that are rebuffed and restricted. Interwoven within these two definitions are the types of social capital that New Labour approved of and those that do not fit the model. The complexities of the neighbourhood struggle and community protest that took place in this area do not fit with the type of social empowerment that New Labour would envisage as part of their urban strategy. The political involvement with citizenship and public participation has been taken further by the Big Society agenda of the post-2010 Conservative-led administration (Smith *et al.*, 2010). This is not explicitly dealt with in the empirical chapters as the research was carried out before the administration was in power, but it does have relevance to the on-going relationship between government and volunteering.

There remains a personal aspect to interactions with citizenship that is filled with individual ethics and choice, as well as past experiences and subsequent motivations that do not fit neatly into the definitions and political aspirations of either active citizenship or active communities. This thesis specifically explores these individual ethics and motivations (as heralded by Rose, N, 2000 and Staeheli, 2008), looking beyond political explanations behind citizenship responsibilities and volunteering, and investigates how volunteers' view and frame their own volunteering. Therefore, another model of citizenship that moves away from these models with politicised overtones is necessary.

2.2.3 From active to ecological citizenship

Before going on to discuss a more specified form of 'ecological citizenship', that may be more adapted to the citizenship found within environmental volunteering, the contested relationship between volunteering and active citizenship needs to be outlined. The Active

Citizenship Centre define active citizenship as ‘citizens taking opportunities to become actively involved in defining and tackling the problems of their communities and improving their quality of life’ (2006). This would seem to place it very much in line with the aims and goals of volunteering but Fielding *et al.* (1991) argue strongly against using the two terms interchangeably. They make the argument that ‘what these people do (voluntary workers) owes its origins to some quite other motive than that of the duty of a citizen to the state’ (1991: 97). They see the confluence of these terms as being an intrusion into a more personal and nuanced choice by an individual that was not solely, and often not at all, concerned with service to the government. This view can be taken a step further when considering that once volunteering can be interpreted as a form of active citizenship, then it is transformed into something that is part of a ‘mild coercion by the state’ (Kearns, 1995: 158). This may, however, be something that the volunteer does not want to associate themselves with and, in some cases, is actively hostile to. Jochum *et al.* reported that focus groups looking at a lack of clarity and agreement around the term active citizenship within the voluntary sector and volunteers ‘did not warm’ (2005: 25) to the term active citizenship and perceived it as having both political and discriminatory connotations. This reaction expresses the dangers of using the terms ‘volunteer’ and ‘active citizen’ interchangeably and these debates are played out within the area of ecological citizenship as well.

Dobson (2003) develops the idea of distinguishing between environmental and ecological citizenship. He uses environmental citizenship as an extension of liberal citizenship, focused on the connection between citizenship and sustainability. This is strongly linked to the state and the public sphere. On the other hand, he defines ecological citizenship as a morally driven choice (not purely a responsibility or duty driven motivation) of an individual to address the socio-environmental impacts of their acts. This works above and beyond territorial boundaries. Ecological citizenship would therefore include both the

public and the private spheres and have the aim of improving society and addressing the whole range of environmental impacts across the social, economic and cultural scales. These wider environmental responsibilities and morals are easily introduced to the approach of civic republicanism, as introduced previously by Isin and Wood (1999), as there is a great resonance with the concepts of self-sacrifice for the greater good and being an active citizen which run through green politics, encouraging people to associate the implications of their daily activities with the state of the wider environment.

It is widely argued that the idea of ecological citizenship has a relationship with citizenship that explicitly undermines a direct connection between citizen rights and responsibilities. Instead, the obligations of an ecological citizen are based around a ‘non-reciprocal sense of justice, or of compassion’ (Dobson, 2000: 43). This understanding of responsibility or obligation is one that functions across space and time. The individual’s obligation is for both future generations and also for the good of distant others. There is therefore not just the existence of a local or national citizenship, but also a citizenship that includes global belonging and responsibility to both human and non-human others. In most understandings, ecological citizenship is also seen as a mechanism of inclusion and political participation (often beyond just that of environmental issues), a status that is related to green politics and being liberal environmental citizens (Bell, 2005). It can also be viewed as a way for those people who are affected by ecological problems to participate in environmental decision-making (Christoff, 1996). Thomashow’s definition is quoted below:

‘the ecologically aware citizen takes responsibility for the place where he or she lives, understands the importance of making collective decisions regarding the commons, seeks to contribute to the common good, identifies with bioregions and ecosystems rather than obsolete nation-states or transnational corporations, considers the wider impact of his or

her actions, is committed to mutual and collaborative community building, observes the flow of power in controversial issues, attends to the quality of interpersonal relationships in political discourse, and acts according to his or her convictions'

(Thomashow, 1995: 13)

This definition brings together issues of individual responsibility and links the relationship between local action and broader global (bioregion and ecosystem) concern. Within the definition is also the idea of community building and the association this can have with individual action. As well as these points, there is also an acceptance and interaction with political discourse and the importance of interpersonal relations while observing the flow of power in controversial issues. Political influence is therefore not ignored but embraced within the limits and understanding of personal beliefs and convictions. It is the freedom to express and act upon these personal convictions that adds another aspect to ecological citizenship compared to active citizenship.

It is particularly troublesome that Thomashow refers to nation-states as obsolete when claiming rights and understandings through them is an integral part of the idea of ecological citizenship. The very people who are claiming the rights of an ecological citizenship are themselves part of the political system so it is impossible to consider this concept without being immersed in the idea of a political and socially constructed existence. The idea of 'caring for nature' throws up its own constructed notions. The very idea of 'nature' is socially constructed and the idea of the perfect nature of the past, with the balance of humans living in harmony with nature is a social/cultural project in itself (Dizard, 1993). It is clear that ecological citizenship is immersed in political relationships and however the term is conceived, its definition and practical implications are still linked through the amalgamation of the claiming of rights and the fulfilling of duties. The idea

of being active participative citizens is one that permeates through this view. This would encompass the interests of the future generations and the environment itself.

However, Mero-Escrihuela has argued that there is too much of a focus on ecological citizenship being an individualistic approach and that ‘ecological citizenship should entail collective engagement in the creation of just and sustainable societies’ (2008: 127). The emphasis on group work and collaboration is taking this a step further into group motivated volunteer activities. It is these influences that the thesis will go on to explore through examining how individuals view their own participation in environmental volunteering. Ecological citizenship raises ideas around individual and collective relationships with nature and landscape. The thesis will examine what motivations drive individuals to volunteer and look at how these motivations are influenced by environmental and social explanations. There will also be an examination of the social and group dynamics that are encountered within the environmental volunteering. Ecological citizenship also places the autonomy back onto the individual, removing much of the political influences. This will be explored to ascertain in what way individuals view their own participation. This will also give scope to explore more altruistically based motivations that are not as rooted within the rights or responsibilities of active citizenship and discuss the previously mentioned ethics of care within environmental volunteering. These ideas are all fed by what motivates individuals to volunteer and what compels them to continue.

2.2.4 General and environmental volunteering motivations

Understanding why individuals take part in environmental volunteering is a key question of the thesis. Understanding these motivations will also help to appreciate the emotional responses to the volunteering experience and the well-being impacts of what the volunteers feel. Thoits and Hewitt (2001) name four theoretical models of volunteer work that have

been used to guide the literature. The first of these is the ‘volunteer motivations model’ which gives particular focus to the individual’s goals for getting involved in volunteering. This covers a whole plethora of reasons, ranging from learning new skills and preparing for a new career to expressing personal values and re-affirming community commitment. Second is the ‘value and attitudes’ model which emphasizes the connection between volunteering and the individual’s belief in citizenship and ideas of civic responsibility. The third model is the ‘role-identity model’ that shows the influence that past volunteer service and experience can have on the desire and the motivation to continue volunteering. Related to this is the ‘group-identity model’ that suggests that individuals are more likely to connect and volunteer with those that they can identify with, be it through social groupings or a shared sense of concern. The fourth model, the ‘volunteer personality model’ highlights that personality or other dispositional factors will influence who volunteers. Here, issues of empathy and helpfulness within individuals come into play. Thoits and Hewitt then go on to bring forward a ‘personal well-being model’. This is a fifth potential model that they describe as looking at ‘physical and mental health as resources necessary for seeking out (or being sought for) and becoming involved in community service’ (ibid: 117). The individual well-being matters of confidence, control, self-worth and belonging therefore begin to take a stronger role in the motivations to engage in volunteering.

These broad understandings of volunteer motivations are reinforced and built upon by the belief from functional analysis that people volunteer in order to satisfy one or more needs or motives (Finkelstein, 2009). Clary *et al.* (1998) identified six motivational functions that were served by volunteering: *values* motives that refer to the desire of volunteers to reflect a particular ethos or system of beliefs; *career* motives to gain experience or training; *social* motives aimed at spending time with others; *understanding* motive function that helps volunteers to acquire new experiences or exercise skills that they might not otherwise use; *protective* motives are those used to negate or reduce the effect of guilt, perhaps that guilt

of an increasing carbon footprint. Finally they cite *enhancement* motives that have the role of increasing positive affect through personal growth and increased self-esteem. Functional analysis therefore claims that the driver to continue volunteering is primarily guided by what extent the volunteering experience fulfils the relevant starter motives. This, however, seems to ignore the issue of volunteer motivations being influenced by their experiences and how these starter motivations have the possibility of being very different from their motivations to continue volunteering once they have begun with a group or organisation. The thesis examines both initial and continuing motivations of volunteers to further understanding of why individuals become involved with and continue with environmental volunteering. These are investigated to see if they remain static, or whether new motivations are developed through the volunteering experience. These may be in addition to, or a replacement to the initial motivations. This leads onto a consideration of particular motivations that may drive individuals to work in specifically environmental volunteering.

In recent years this has begun to receive more attention from those involved in both academic and policy writings. For these purposes there will be a particular focus on the UK and Scottish contexts. The Dalglish Report (2006) that was discussed in Chapter 1 asks what is ‘unique’ about environmental volunteering. It states that:

‘The motivation of the volunteers is sometimes a wish to contribute to the improvement of the environment, but can also relate to individual development, to health or to social benefits, either to the community or the individual. Like other types of volunteering, it can be a mechanism for acquiring new skills, including social and citizenship skills and can offer a variety of hands on work experience as a stepping stone in a career pathway.’

(Dalglish, 2006: 6)

The quotation above uses the general environment as a base for the motivation to begin but also cites other non-environmental factors as being important. Dalglish goes on to testify that, for environmental volunteers, the main motivation is generally some environmental connection. There may also be social motives but these are often ‘generated by the common interest in the environment’ (ibid: 8). Interestingly, when considering community-based environmental projects, recognition of more varied motivations is accepted where the environment is often not the starting point, but rather an engagement from wanting to be involved or to interact socially (ibid). There is therefore a subtle difference between what ‘leads’ the volunteering motivations and what are additional motivations. It may be a willingness by the individual to become a more active member of their community and join in social networks, or it may be a more grounded motivation in a care for the environment. The thesis will look at these different environmental and non-environmental motivations and look at how they interact across a number of volunteering groups.

Similar to Dalglish, Ockenden (2007), in his literature review of volunteering in the natural outdoors for the Institute of Volunteering Research cited four main motivational drivers for volunteers to get involved in this type of work. These were a love of nature, environmental awareness, social and cultural factors, and to enhance skills and employability. The first two are more transparently environmental while the final two are factors that could be considered as being attributable to non-environmental volunteering as well. However, Ockenden considers these latter reasons as working in combination with the environmental motivations to drive the individual volunteer to get involved. This thesis will consider how this combination makes environmental volunteering distinct, taking into account contact with natural environments and the emotionality and embodiment associated with group participation.

The most recent studies into environmental volunteering motivations were conducted by O'Brien *et al.* (2008; 2010) for the Scottish Forestry Trust and Forestry Commission. Motivations here were led by an environmental awareness and appreciation. From this starting point, of training and skill acquirement, the need for activity and the need for personal contact and encouragement grow. Importantly, they go on to describe the benefits to the individual and the community that can be accrued from the volunteering and how this can reinforce the motivations. A number of geographers have argued, however that it is necessary to go beyond just looking at motivations (Conradson, 2003; Jupp, 2008).

The thesis considers volunteering as a combination of emotional, social and embodied practices through which enlivened geographies of active environmental volunteering can be explored. It responds to calls for 'more lively and creative accounts' of the involvement of people in varied dimensions of social action, voluntarism and participation (Conradson, 2003: 1989) and contributes to debates on the need to understand 'different kinds of "doings"' and to value 'everyday interactions, practices and feelings' as key elements in diverse socio-spatial practices of social participation or activism (Jupp, 2008: 341). This extends the understanding of 'what (else) matters' (Horton and Kraftl, 2009) and has been focussed on by other research projects in environmental volunteering (see Chapter 1: Section 1.2.3) and in policy (see Chapter 1: 1.2.2). This thesis incorporates more fully an understanding of the 'doing' of volunteering as constituted in and through particularly active environmental volunteering in which the emotions, the embodied and the socio-spatially situated experiences of volunteers are given a central role (Roberts and Devine, 2004). The impact of the environmental volunteering is particularly examined in terms of well-being throughout the thesis. This involves a range of emotional, physical, embodied and social understandings of well-being that weave their way through the research.

2.3 Emotional, physical and social well-being in environmental volunteering

This section will go on to more explicitly discuss the notion of well-being and how it will be understood through the thesis. There are three forms of well-being that all interlink: that of emotional, physical and social. A general definition will be looked at first to frame well-being. ‘Well-being’, has been described as ‘positive health’, or ‘a state of physical mental and social well-being’ (World Health Organisation, 1948: 100). It is understood as a dimension of a ‘social model’ of health which locates individual experience within social contexts and is concerned especially with people's interpretation of them (Cattell *et al.*, 2008: 545). The concept enables a focus on what promotes and protects health, rather than on what causes illness (Blaxter, 1990; Bowling, 1991; Gattrell *et al.*, 2000). There is therefore a focus on enhancing or developing *wellness* as opposed to a curing of *unwellness*. There is a social scope to this experience, as well as a physical and emotional feeling and these will be looked at through active environmental volunteering and contact with nature:

‘The two strands of research – into social capital and into the human health benefits of contact with nature – merge in anecdotal and empirical evidence that engagement in nature-based activities in a group setting has spin-off mental health benefits, relating to a combination of exposure to natural environments, increased levels of incidental exercise and increased social capital’

(Maller *et al.*, 2002: 55)

Maller *et al.* are showing that there are linkages within nature-based activities of being in natural environments and an increased level of mental, physical and social well-being. These themes will be used to frame the structure of this section. To begin with, emotional

geographies will be used to frame geographical understanding of well-being from this perspective.

2.3.1 Emotional geographies and well-being

In order to understand the value given to environmental work by volunteers, it must be understood how the emotions they experience are communicated and represented. The evolution and differing strands of emotional geography coming from the geographic traditions of humanistic geography, feminist geography and non-representational theory help us to decipher and attempt to comprehend how these emotions are felt. These theories will be summarised and linked to the understanding of environmental volunteering. This will be carried out in an attempt to interpret the specific effects of being active and being in the natural outdoors and how these come together within environmental volunteering. The history and future direction of emotional geography has a great deal to contribute to this area.

Bondi (2005) outlines the history and contributions that the geographic traditions, mentioned above, have given to emotional geography. Humanistic geography was a reaction in the 1970s to the concept that geography was a spatial science informed by thinking in neo-classical economics that believed humans to be singular, economically rational actors. The criticism aimed at this by humanistic geographers was that objective and rational factors were given precedence over the more emotive and subjective aspects of life. As Bondi points out, the term 'emotion' may not have featured to a great extent but the seeding of the ideas of the subjective nature of life and how people interact in certain places, spaces and situations laid the groundwork for a more in-depth analysis into questions of meaning, perception and value. The critique of humanistic geography was that it was concerned too heavily with the individual that was ruled by human

consciousness and human agency, and that assumed people to be self-contained, self-directing agents capable of self-knowledge, that were separate from other people and their environments (Gregory, 1981). This was argued as being insufficient to adequately describe and understand the full range of human understanding that would include non-conscious, non-individual and non-human processes.

The emergence of feminist geography and an attempt to break down and challenge the binaries of geographical thinking has had a great influence on the development of emotional geography. Feminist geographers have gone a long way to addressing how emotions are present and flow through both social and physical environments but also the experiences of individuals. This has had its roots in the feminist critique of geographical knowledge being inscribed and understood through masculinist gender relations and that 'subjective emotional matters may be ignored or essentialised by masculinist knowledge productions' (Parr, 2005: 476). Rose (1993) has destabilised the boundaries that were perceived to have existed around people and their environment as well as individuals themselves, blurring the boundaries and making fluid connections between people, place and experience. This gives emotions the ability to permeate and flow through people and places and also acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher and how this awareness can help elicit emotional responses of being in the world from the researcher and the researched. This can be achieved through more qualitative methods of in-depth interviews, ethnographic studies and life histories that contribute to more personal understandings of lived geographies (Parr, 2005: 478). In common with humanistic geography, feminist geographers writing in this area still tended to focus on the importance of the individual and their experiences and how this is communicated. This is where non-representational geography intervenes and challenges the ability of discursive forms of representations to fully capture the numerous ways in which experiences can be observed and lived (Thrift, 1996).

Thrift (2004) uses the terms of ‘emotion’ and ‘affect’ in slightly different ways. Emotion is understood to be a specific and nameable state such as surprise, anger or shame. This term is therefore more associated with a way in which an individual may describe what they ‘felt’ or ‘experienced’. Affect is considered by Thrift to be the bodily experience. This is something that is pre- or extra-discursive and evoked conceptually as opposed to empirically. The practices and actions of certain behaviours are consequently given precedence over verbal representations and the text that is produced to describe these. To try and approach this, non-representational geography has attempted to highlight embodied methodology, focussing on ethnography and performative interventions. This is very much a switch from focussing on what people say they do, to looking at their actions. In other words, this is to look at the actual practices and not just the representations of behaviour. This, however, has been critiqued by feminist geographers who see non-representational theory (NRT) as reinforcing the binary between the personal and the political and keeping emotions to one side. This makes this approach somewhat detached from the relations of emotions in everyday life that Thien (2005) argues should be essential to the everyday practices of volunteering. This thesis aims to put these emotions and embodied encounters at the centre of the accounts of volunteer experiences.

Emotional geography is also concerned with the association between feelings themselves and the representations and accounts of these feelings that are experienced through the body and within particular spaces (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). The short-term experience of an emotion or emotions can have a cumulative affect on well-being. In this sense, well-being is the long term wellness of an individual, an underlying sense of being and *feeling* well or unwell. Therefore, through the physical tasks, an emotional response is experienced and expressed by the volunteer.

Townsend (2006) outlines in more detail the emotional well-being benefits associated specifically with active environmental volunteering. This research emphasises the importance of not only being placed in nature and making friends and community connections, but also the significance of reaching a sense of achievement and shared pleasure in the work that is done and making a positive contribution to human society. These are all very emotive feelings and experiences that are considered to be positive effects. Townsend then goes on to outline barriers to participation. These include shyness, fear, stereotyping of groups, and lack of awareness and recognition of health benefits. It is interesting to note that many of these terms and barriers have their roots in the individual's perceptions and are therefore, like interaction with landscapes, not universal and are dependant upon the past experience of the individual. Experiences of volunteering may therefore not always have solely positive associations. This may be due to a number of reasons and this will be explored in the thesis to aid in understanding how negative experiences have a part to play in environmental volunteering.

According to Damasio, emotions are not just feelings, but changes that take place in the body in response to some stimulus. All emotions, he stated, 'have some kind of regulatory role to play, leading in one way or another to the creation of circumstances advantageous to the organism exhibiting the phenomenon . . . their role is to assist the organism in maintaining life' (Damasio, 1999: 1). This biological and evolutionary approach by Damasio is a very detached way of approaching a complex theme. It can be observed that human beings' emotional responses have gone far beyond the objective of 'maintaining' life. 'Enriching' may be a better word to describe the role of emotions. This biological approach to understanding emotions is continued by Milton:

'emotions are often induced unconsciously. In those animals equipped to perceive their emotions, they generate feelings, and in those animals like ourselves, which are equipped

to perceive their feelings, they generate consciousness. None of this depends on reasoned thought (though reasoned thought can be involved in inducing emotions). It is a perceptual process, the picking up of information, or meaning, from our surroundings and from our own bodies... Thus the process of valuing things in the world is inseparable from the emotions and feelings they induce in us; without these emotions and feelings there would be no value.'

(Milton, 2002: 100)

If this is to be accepted, then understanding what a person feels about a particular experience is central to the emotions that they encounter consciously and unconsciously. Often feelings and emotions are blurred and considered as the same sensation but Milton distinguishes feelings as the conscious response to a particular emotion. As a result of this, there may be a gap between an individual's emotional experience and the forms in which that experience is expressed, between what they feel and what they are constrained to say and do in particular contexts. There is therefore a balance to be found in interpreting emotional responses to experiences within environmental volunteering. The thesis explores these feelings of emotional well-being by examining the 'doing' of volunteering (Conradson, 2003). This influences the methodological approach to the research, making it necessary to not only discuss, but also observe and take part in volunteer activities. This acknowledges the need to examine not only social interactions and human-nature interactions but also examine how these take place through a physical and embodied experience of being in a place.

2.3.2 Physical well-being and embodiment in environmental volunteering

There have been growing discussions in the literature relating to the physical benefits of exercise in the natural outdoors and the relationship this has with psychological well-being

(Cooper *et al.*, 1999; Pretty *et al.*, 2005; Hartig, 2008). In this section, the physicality of tasks and how volunteers experience them will be used to link with aspects of well-being. As part of the physical being in the landscape, embodiment will be used to further frame this understanding of well-being.

It has been found that this physical activity in the natural outdoors and in social groupings can bring enhanced personal and communication skills. This is done through group-working that develops social skills and builds levels of self-esteem (Mattson, 1992). This is seen to be particularly important in the treatment of people who are perhaps trying to regain mobility or tackle drug and alcohol problems. It has also been argued that exercise in the environment has been associated with an enhanced mental and spiritual health. This has been attributed to escaping the pressures of modern living and gaining a connection to the plants and earth in the form of multi-sensory stimulation and a very embodied interaction with the natural surroundings (Edensor, 2000). This opens up questions as to what extent 'active' environmental volunteering can contribute to well-being across both physical and emotional boundaries and how these influence each other. The use of the term 'active' is used to show the physical and embodied experience of this type of environmental volunteering. Although looking at the wider impacts of the volunteering, the case study groups all have a strong element of 'hands on' work that involves being immersed in a natural environment and having a physical exposure to a volunteering task. This embodied experience is explored in the thesis and the importance of this form of involvement to the volunteers is investigated.

Embodiment is a concept that assumes the experiences of the individual are shaped by the active and reactive entity that is their body (Parr, 2005). Active environmental volunteering would seem to be a physical and embodied experience. Hall writes:

'the physical and mental state of the body, its fleshy reality, is central to our experiences of health... Biology... must be reinterpreted to consider the tangible body as a social entity, marked and imprinted by the temporality of social processes.'

(Hall, 2000: 28)

This bodily experience, in conjunction with the personal and social processes and meanings that imprint the individual will be central to understanding and interpreting the volunteer's embodied experience. In relation to well-being, thinking within emotional geographies can again be used to explore the way in which volunteers experience aspects of emotion and well-being through the body:

'Our first and foremost, most immediate and intimately felt geography is of the body, the site of emotional experience and expression. Emotions take place within and around this closest of spatial scales.'

(Davidson and Milligan, 2004: 523)

The body is therefore the conduit and vessel through which well-being takes place. The feelings of touch and physical closeness are central in the experiences of an individual. These embodied practices and the 'doing' of the volunteering open up different ways to understand volunteering. If the body is central to the experience, then this opens up areas of physical 'being' within landscapes that can reveal aspects of contact with nature, with social connections and with specific volunteering tasks that can be encountered in a fleeting moment or re-visited on a number of occasions. This opens up the experience to be individual to each volunteer, to their physical abilities, to their past experiences and confidences and also to their values and ethics. Each of these areas will be examined in the thesis, looking at how the embodied nature of environmental volunteering has influences on physical and emotional well-being. This, in turn, has impacted the methods used to

access the volunteering experiences. To capture these aspects, an ethnographic approach has been employed that includes participant observation in the environmental volunteering, helping to understand both the physical, emotional and social aspects of the volunteering that is reflected in the volunteer group work.

2.3.3 Community, social capital and well-being

It has been found that group volunteering activity impact levels of social capital, whilst developing personal and communication skills. There are certain relationships within group work and volunteering that impact how this engagement takes place.

‘Social capital should aim to not only bond individuals together but also to create bridges of reciprocity and trustworthiness between their members. Bridges of reciprocity and trustworthiness are embodied in coordination and communication, past success and collaboration’

(Roberts and Devine, 2004: 283-284)

This suggests that social capital, while having the ability to create individual bonds and connections, should also be able to show itself within how a group works, taking into account their past experiences and ventures. The possibility to build social capital is therefore not always positive, with Putnam (2000) highlighting that membership in voluntary organisations is not always hands-on and active, but often in the form of membership lists or ‘checkbook activism’. Such passive interactions diminish the ability to build meaningful relationships. These relationships can be viewed within virtues such as sentiments, values and beliefs (Rose, N, 1999) that enhance feelings of trust and community bonding through cooperation. It is these feelings of group and wider

community identity that will be examined in this thesis. Pain and Smith (2010) speak of a particularly *social* geographical notion of well-being:

'accounts which deal explicitly with issues of agency and empowerment, tackle themes like resilience as well as vulnerabilities, and include people's shared understandings of wellbeing...a collective concern and responsibility for individuals' location, action and experience in local, national and global society.'

(Pain and Smith, 2010: 301)

The use of the term community is one that is being used to describe a number of interacting factors within and through social interactions. Staeheli (2008) usefully brings in both sections of the word 'community'. This includes the 'common' shared experiences and ethics of individuals as well as the 'unity' that can be bred from this (Staeheli, 2008). It is the 'unity' part that is perhaps more interesting. Within this lies the question as to whether the sameness is being constructed within the groups or whether the groups merely identify and come together over a shared goal. The commonality of the community may therefore lead to exclusion of those not sharing these values. It is important to see community through this differentiated viewpoint and not as a homogenous and inflexible term. The community interactions surrounding environmental volunteering will be considered in this thesis through the volunteers' social networks in relation to the groups. This will take into account how the shared values and interests of the group provide a commonality that also builds a platform to understand different forms of community that can be produced through these relations. The communities that are catered for in this sense can be traditional forms of community relating to territorial proximity and an attachment to a bounded place, such as a neighbourhood. However, there may be evidence of community forming over other more extended spatialities around volunteer identities and commonalities that bring them to together to participate in environmental volunteering.

This echoes Miller's breaking of communities into those that have a territorial basis and those that are spatially dispersed and 'stretched out' (Miller, 1993). Those with a territorial basis have received most attention and often are focused on the local neighbourhood action group or village council. The 'stretched-out' version is more complex and has begun to receive more attention. Anderson's (1991) 'imagined communities', with its basis in a national community – imagined due to the majority of the members never meeting face-to-face – begins to bring out some of these ideas. Spatially dispersed groups or those whose members perhaps meet only once or very seldom may still inspire strong identification from individuals despite not belonging to the a set space. These bounded and unbounded ideas of community can be used to view groups and their social networks and how they have found commonality, not just within space but also within values. This can particularly be applied to environmental volunteering groups through feelings of a global ethic of care and of an identification with nature that goes beyond traditional community boundaries. The thesis will explore these areas of community and how they impact upon individual well-being and on social relations. This will be through both physical and imagined networks of community that are based around the particularly social activities of environmental volunteering.

2.4 Landscapes, nature and emotion

As discussed in the previous section, the thesis will be looking at the well-being impacts of being involved in 'active' environmental volunteering, an act in itself that involves a physical encounter and presence in a particular landscape. This section will explore the literature around the natural environments and landscapes in which the environmental volunteering takes place and how these places have the potential to impact on well-being.

2.4.1 Experiences of landscape

The emotional response to being ‘in nature’ or being enveloped in certain environments has been explored by a number of geographers (Gesler, 1992; Williams, 1999; Kearns and Moon, 2002). The therapeutic effects of these environments have been highlighted:

‘In coming close to other ecologies and rhythms of life, we may obtain distance from everyday routines, whilst perhaps also experiencing renewed energy and finding different perspectives upon our circumstances’

(Conradson, 2005b: 103)

Often, these authors, and Conradson above, are writing about particular natural environments that individuals can expose themselves to, away from the routines of everyday lives and surroundings. It is important to understand how this emotional attachment to a place may motivate a person to volunteer for a specific cause or in a specific environment. Milton writes that ‘how we feel during an experience influences what we remember about it, and therefore how it affects our future thoughts, feelings and actions’ (2002: 148). The history of a person’s interactions and experiences must therefore be considered as a backdrop to their motivations to volunteer. The way people may experience certain things differently also plays an important part in appreciating how emotions affect how people approach their environment differently:

‘Some people learn to enjoy wild, rugged landscapes while others learn to love woodlands, or deserts, or cities. Some learn to identify and empathize with snakes, or fleas, or spiders, while others learn indifference, or fear, or revulsion. Some learn to be excited by success in sport, or by money, or political power, or the conspicuous consumption of material

wealth, while others learn to be repelled by these things. Some find contentment in family relationships, while others fear commitment and responsibility.'

(Milton, 2002: 148)

Milton is making the point that not all landscapes are experienced in the same way and that landscapes do not always have the same meanings and representations to all individuals.

Wylie (2007) discusses landscape phenomenology and the insight into culture-nature relations that this approach enables. Wylie draws on Tim Ingold's work (1993, 1995; 2000) on embodiment, perception and dwelling and his influential account of landscape. New cultural geographies had 'defined landscape as a particular set of cultural values, attitudes and meanings: a 'way of seeing' the world' (Wylie, 2007: 153). This was problematised by Ingold as divisively preserving and continuing a series of dualities, between subject and object, mind and body and, most importantly, culture and nature. Ingold argues that it is incorrect to have a set of disembodied cultural meanings (a symbolic landscape) on one side and a blank canvas to be projected onto on the other (a physical landscape). This constructed distinction of the 'ideas of culture and matter of nature' (Wylie, 2007: 154) is argued as being an incorrect assumption. The Cartesian dualism of splitting the natural and the social sciences is one that has perpetuated this assumption and one that has been particularly apparent in the approaches to human and physical geography. Wylie writes of the 'culturalist' epistemologies that Ingold has taken issue with:

'Linking together all of these various works is, first, an understanding of culture as an in-essence immaterial realm of texts, images, signs, symbols, representations, discourses and so on. Second, the 'construction' of cultural meaning is conceived as a movement of inscription of signification through which the material and concrete planes of the world (e.g. the body, nature) are given life, value and resonance'

(Wylie, 2007: 155)

Reality is then described as being culturally constructed because of this and communicated by the varied forms of text, image and representation through accumulated codes, meanings and signs. As mentioned previously, non-representational theory treats these acts of representing as being part of the embodied practice and performance in the world. The embodiment described here is where sense is made and subjectivity is performed. Wylie goes on to speak about the shift from speaking about the 'images of landscape' to 'landscaping'. Current research literature would, therefore, focus on the practices of landscape and how these shape the self, body and landscape through practice and performance. This is in contrast to looking upon already-realised representations of the landscape. This approach highlights the interconnectedness of human and non-human worlds and complicates viewing certain landscapes as being inherently natural or automatically conducive to health and well-being. The thesis will build on this by examining whether the natural environments of volunteering are necessarily therapeutic and studying the complex nature of these interactions.

2.4.2 Therapeutic landscapes and experiences

The notion of therapeutic landscapes has been based around the associations between environmental, social and symbolic dimensions of contact with certain landscapes. Environmental landscapes such as lakes, rivers and mountains have come to be viewed as

intrinsically therapeutic in their effects. The example to perhaps illustrate this is the lone wanderer in the wilderness gaining spiritual (as well as physical) well-being from their surroundings (Lorimer and Lund, 2008).

Collins and Kearns (2007) outlined five ways in which natural environments, in this case beaches, can be viewed as spaces of potential therapeutic landscape experience and could enhance well-being. These included an enhanced degree of physical or psychological removal from the everyday, an opportunity to be closer to natural environments, providing opportunities for both solitude and social activity and also as a way of shaping collective and social identity. These first four ways are drawn from Conradson (2005a) and his work on therapeutic landscape experiences that will be expanded on later. Collins and Kearns cite the fifth way as being the ability to exercise and carry out physical activity in these spaces. These aspects and issues around individual and group well-being are used to shape and illustrate the thesis, helping inform the specifically ‘active’ nature of the volunteering. The thesis takes the volunteering engagement further by also looking at the surrounding volunteer activities, beyond just the active tasks and looking at the surrounding activities (such as committee meetings and administration) that volunteers take part in. Through an individual and group attachment to place, space and nature, these volunteer experiences can be viewed within the bigger picture of their lives and their views. The well-being link between mind, body and society is one that resonates through the research questions and the thesis in general. To draw on these arguments the idea of a landscape having therapeutic qualities will be explored further.

Specific natural environments have been proposed in the geography literature as places that promoted and maintained health (Gesler, 1992; Williams, 1999; Kearns and Moon, 2002). Conradson describes this view of a therapeutic landscape experience as a ‘positive physiological and psychological outcome deriving from a person’s imbrication with a

particular socio-natural-material setting' (Conradson, 2005a: 339). It has also been implied that therapeutic landscapes can be designed 'to promote the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of those that visit them' (Thurber and Malinowski, 1999: 53-54). These may be particular areas or settings that encourage rest and recuperation, such as those involved in retreat tourism (Lea, 2008) that deliberately set themselves within a natural setting but also 'enhance' (Dewsbury, 2003: 1913) the space to be particularly conducive to feelings of 'working in conjunction with the place' (Lea, 2008: 96).

This notion of the supposed 'natural' environment and the 'designed' environment are particularly interesting in the case of landscapes of conservation as these can be seen as areas that are attempting to retain or rediscover an original 'natural state' that has already been socially and physically constructed. Conradson (2005a) argues that not enough attention has been given to the relational dynamics through which these therapeutic effects are claimed to emerge. He argues that a physical presence within a landscape should not be directly linked with 'the unproblematic receipt of its therapeutic influence' (2005a:338). Conradson uses these relations of individuals and place through an understanding of Nigel Thrift's 'ecology of place' (1998):

'it is not always enough just to "be" in a place to guarantee a "therapeutic" outcome: rather there is a need for a skill or artistry in our engagements with place'

(Thrift, 1998: 310-311)

The landscape in itself is therefore not necessarily therapeutic, but may encourage a therapeutic experience if an individual is able or open to embrace it. The problem created is that there is a direct influential flow from physical and embodied presence in a landscape with an unproblematic receipt of its therapeutic influence. Instead of being universal for every person, Conradson argues that these environments are experienced in very different

ways ranging from enjoyment to anxiety. Burgess (1996) highlights how forestry can be an area of ‘fear’ for some and how scenic environments are not universally viewed as positive spaces by all. Gesler (1992) uses the example of some people viewing a hospital (a space of therapy) as a place of joy, trust and hope, while another person may view it as a place of pain, mistrust and fear. Therapeutic landscapes must, therefore, be approached as a relational outcome of a complex set of transactions between a person and their socio-environmental setting and past experiences. These issues will affect who volunteers in certain environments. This relational self should take in to account all the actors in a particular environment, both human and non-human. Human actors may be given a greater emphasis in relation to other people and events but the non-human actors such as plants and animals as well as created objects such as homes and cars must also be acknowledged as making up the ‘self’ and contributing to the understanding and reaction to particular places as non-passive actors. The term therapeutic landscape is perhaps misleading on this line of thought and the term therapeutic landscape *experience* (or landscaping, as was mentioned earlier) may be more useful to take in to account the individuality of particular encounters (Conradson, 2005a).

Thurber and Malinowski (1999) use an example of Camp Belknap, an American summer camp, to illustrate some of the effects that immersion in a natural landscape can have. Many of the boys at the camp said that the surrounding natural environment made it ‘better’ due to the contrast this had to the urban way of life. It was repeated by many that it was relaxing and peaceful with a restorative effect. Conradson (2005b) uses the example of Holton Lee, a respite care centre in Dorset. This centre is set in heathland and aims to give the patients freedom to access the surrounding countryside without the presence of a carer. From this centre, Conradson outlines four themes of well-being:

- Distance from everyday routines and domestic demands
- Close to the natural environment in uncommon ways
- Opportunity for solitude and friendships
- Emergence of a new dimension of selfhood

Many of the themes in the above two examples could be applied to volunteer work. These types of case-study take into account physical/mental well-being with strong links to socialising and societal benefit. The emergence of a different dimension of selfhood is particularly important as this has the possibility, in some cases, of being transferred to the patient's wider life in the form of more confidence, increased energy levels and possible continued social connections. The different dimension of selfhood refers to a long-term change of outlook, the emergence of an alternative way for individuals to perceive themselves and the world around them. This literature has strong connections with environmental volunteering through the four themes of well-being that Conradson outlined above.

Conradson (2007) uses the term 'stillness' to describe a period of calm within an individual, whereby a person becomes more aware of their direct surroundings and less aware of what is occurring in their wider life. Such an experience may be facilitated by immersion in areas of (predominantly) natural beauty where 'people may thus find themselves lost for words', reflecting a degree of sensory or cognitive overwhelming in the present moment. This sensation can happen in any location, Conradson cites a train or plane journey, but he also acknowledges that therapeutic environments and physically distant spaces from day-to-day living may be most conducive to this. These ideas of stillness and mind placement will be investigated in the thesis to build on what spaces can engender these forms of well-being. Mind placement will be used to describe the thoughts and feelings that the volunteer experiences as they are conducting a task. It will also be

investigated whether all these experiences result in a necessarily positive or calming feeling. Instead, these moments will be considered to ascertain whether they may also provide a space for negative or upsetting feelings and whether volunteers expected such emotions when embarking on their volunteering.

Leading on from the examples given above there are other studies that could link the subjects of environmental volunteering and therapeutic landscapes. Parr (2007) writes on collective garden works through social welfare projects that enable elements of consumption and production, as well as social interaction and political engagement to the participating gardeners, all argued to be central to the concept of social inclusion. Milligan *et al.* (2004) also emphasise the importance of allotments and gardening on the older generation in Northern England. In these studies, group-working, belonging, engagement with nature and socialising are all important outcomes of this type of work. This literature covers a number of broad areas that will be part of the thesis, such as the implications for the wider community and the issue of why individuals participate in volunteering. These studies are particularly based on therapeutic horticulture and horticultural therapy and this project will take it a step further into looking at a broader range of environmental volunteering that engages with a wider and more encompassing understanding of environmental ethics.

These themes of therapeutic landscape interaction will be explored in the thesis through looking at how experiences of environmental volunteering are affected by where the volunteering takes place and what meaning this holds for the individual volunteer. A range of spaces will be looked at that are either natural environments that are far removed to a volunteer's everyday spaces, or those that are closer to the individual's home. Differences between these locations will be examined to ascertain how the location of the tasks and the interplay of human-nature affect well-being.

2.5 Literature conclusion

The sections that have been explored above bring together the areas of the literature that the thesis will look to both expand and build upon. The framings of volunteering and citizenship have been used to understand how the terms of active and ecological citizenship have been used. These will be employed to develop the idea of how individuals frame their own motivations behind volunteering. The thesis will take this beyond the political understandings of citizenship (those of rights and responsibilities associated with the state), to one that more wholly informs the socio-cultural spheres of ecological citizenship and the individual general and environmental motivations and ethics behind this form of volunteering. This will assist in revealing the initial and continuing motivations behind environmental volunteering and the wider socio-political impacts.

The section on well-being will be used to explore areas of emotional, physical and social well-being that are contained throughout the thesis. Emotional geography literature has been used as a framing to how specific emotions can be felt and how they can be explored through the body and within particular spaces (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). The thesis explores these feelings of emotional well-being by examining the ‘doing’ of volunteering (Jupp, 2008). This is strongly rooted in the embodied nature of the volunteering. The influence of active and embodied nature work on physical and emotional well-being will be explored in the thesis. This will give the opportunity to open up individual encounters that are influenced by individual physical ability but also by how volunteers value their bodily exposure to natural environments and the task that they are doing. This will be carried out to examine both practical and ethical groundings in why this active and embodied experience is important to volunteers, going beyond just what the work is they are doing, but also how it is achieved and the reasons behind this.

The thesis will bring together the political and the socio-cultural spheres of general, active and environmental citizenship with a more socio-cultural sphere of landscape attachment, emotional response and motivational influences. The literature on community and social capital will also be built on by the thesis to show how social networks and well-being can be built through environmental volunteering and whether this is a key consideration or an unforeseen impact of the volunteer work. This will also reflect on whether all the physical and imagined networks that are built are always a good thing, or whether there are negative as well as positive aspects within them.

The final section on landscape, nature and emotion will be used to understand how volunteers encounter the areas in which they work. Their attachment to particular places will be examined and the meanings that these hold for them. This will be carried out in areas where volunteers are far removed from their everyday lives, but also within landscapes closer to their homes. The research will take place in wilderness areas as well as urban green spaces, looking at the similarities between these experiences. The therapeutic landscape literature helps to frame this by trying to ascertain what particular areas may be conducive to well-being, while at the same time highlighting that landscape and nature perception is not universal to all individuals.

The following chapter will discuss the overall methodology and research design, initially discussing the process of case-study group selection. The chapter will also consider the implications of employing an ethnographic research strategy and the particular challenges that this presented. This will take a particular focus on the ethics, positionality, emotional and embodied nature of the research and how it was conducted.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research design

The methodology has specifically been designed to be able to tackle issues around motivations to volunteer, emotional and embodied well-being, linkages to social capital and citizenship and the specifics of active environmental work in particular spaces. These are the themes included within the research questions outlined at the end of Chapter 1.

To be able to tackle the complex, holistic and in-depth nature of these questions a case study strategy was adopted (Feagin *et al.* 1991) and an ethnographic approach was taken with the groups selected. Case studies are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data. Yin (1994) presented at least four applications for a case study model: to explain complex causal links in real-life situations; to describe the real-life context of these occurrences; to describe the events in which this happened; and to explore those situations in which the intervention is being evaluated (the positionality and situatedness of both the researcher and researched). This enables a multi-method approach to assist in capturing a rich mosaic of subject matters.

This methodological approach has been used by geographers to tackle similar themes to those that are included in the research questions. These involve issues around mental health, social capital and well-being (Parr, 1998; 2007), embodiment and therapeutic landscapes (Conradson, 2003; 2005a; Gesler, 2003; Lea, 2008) and volunteer experiences (Christie, 2004). A number of these will be outlined and built upon to explain the research design and the methodologies that follow. Conradson (2003) conducted work at a voluntary community drop-in centre in Christchurch, New Zealand. In this study he

volunteered at the centre, as well as attending evening meetings, conducting interviews with centre staff and distributing questionnaires to centre volunteers. This approach was used particularly to analyse how staff and volunteers interacted with each other and the environments in which they operated, to look at the ‘weaving together of bodies, materials and relations’ (Conradson, 2003: 1978). As a second case study approach, Conradson (2005b) looked at a respite care centre in Dorset, England. This is a centre focussed on caring for people with various forms of physical impairment, aiming in particular to facilitate personal well-being through contact with natural environments. He frames the study by discussing how the therapeutic landscape experience is best approached as a relational outcome, as something that emerges through a complex set of transactions between a person and their broader socio-environmental setting. Again, highlighting the centrality of being in a place, Parr (2007) discusses two urban garden schemes where she conducted research:

‘The garden schemes were chosen to represent a range of different ‘natural’ settings: community gardens, removed walled gardens, and allotments... In terms of the two sites discussed above, interviews were conducted with fifteen people with mental-health problems, seventeen staff, and related interested parties...Ethnographic work was also carried out at the two sites between March and November 2004 (supplementing some original scoping work carried out in Nottingham in 2001). For many people who used the gardens, articulating their feelings about garden work was challenging, and so ethnographic note taking was invaluable and focused on observing tasks, relationships between workers and other gardeners, embodied interactions with nature, interactions with wider community members, and through participation in meetings and social activities organised through the garden projects.’

(Parr, 2007: 546)

It is these feelings, relationships, embodied interactions with nature and interactions with wider community members that the research questions of this thesis address. The questions of emotional well-being and the building of social capital that are related to environmental volunteering require an ethnographic case study approach to be able to observe and interact with the complex connections and associations that are taking place.

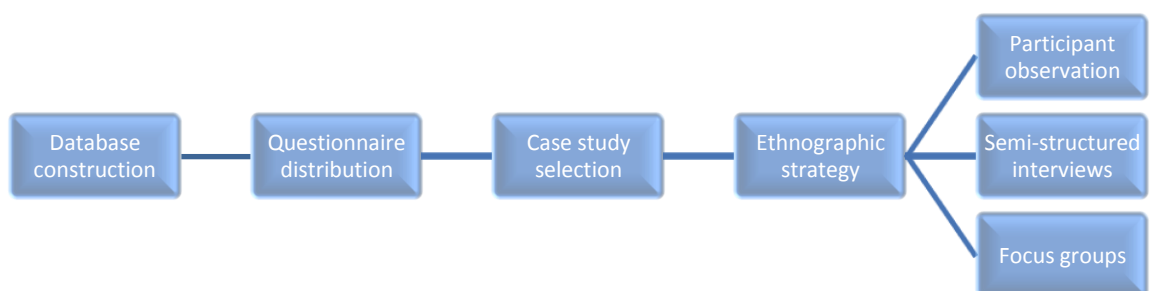
To answer these research questions a broad ethnographic strategy has been employed that builds and draws upon the methods of geographers working in similar areas (as outlined above). This was designed to capture the embodied and emotional nature of active environmental volunteer work but also to situate these practices within the wider volunteering experience. This, therefore, required an intensive and holistic approach that combines qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observation. As part of the participant observation, participant photography was used as a visual methodology for capturing the 'enactment, performance and practice' (Latham, 2004: 2012) of some of the volunteers' encounters.

The volunteering is being framed within definitions of overlapping themes around global and ecological citizenship (Christoff, 1996). To consider the theme of citizenship, the models of active citizenship and ecological citizenship are used. These terms are used to unpack volunteer identifications. Christie (2004) uses interviewing as a method to study the environmental attitudes and motivational factors behind working for an Australian environmental volunteer group. It is these motivational factors that underpin the volunteering and also feed into identifications with ecological citizenship. The ethic of volunteering is what needs to be understood and observed. Often the ethics and motivations are not transparent and it takes this multi-faceted methodological approach to begin to access the details and nuances of ethics in environmental volunteering.

The case study approach also enables a typology of environmental volunteering organisations to be constructed and particular volunteer organisations studied. This process of case study selection will be explained further on in the section. Section 3.2 will discuss the first phase of the research. This section explains the process that lead to selecting the case study groups. Section 3.3 discusses the ethnographic strategy that was employed with the case study groups and Section 3.4 will deal with ethical considerations on positionality, performance and embodiment.

The research design was one that has travelled from database construction, through questionnaire distribution, to case study selection. These were methods that were intended to build towards the more substantial part of the research – the ethnographic strategy. From this case study selection the ethnographic approach was employed with the case study groups, encompassing complementary strategies of participant observation, semi-structured interviewing and focus group work. Figure 3.1 shows this research design:

Figure 3.1: Research design structure



3.2 The process of case study group selection

It was decided to conduct the research with a number of case study groups across Scotland. These groups were selected to represent a broad geographical and typological spectrum of the environmental volunteering groups. To be able to select these groups, it was first

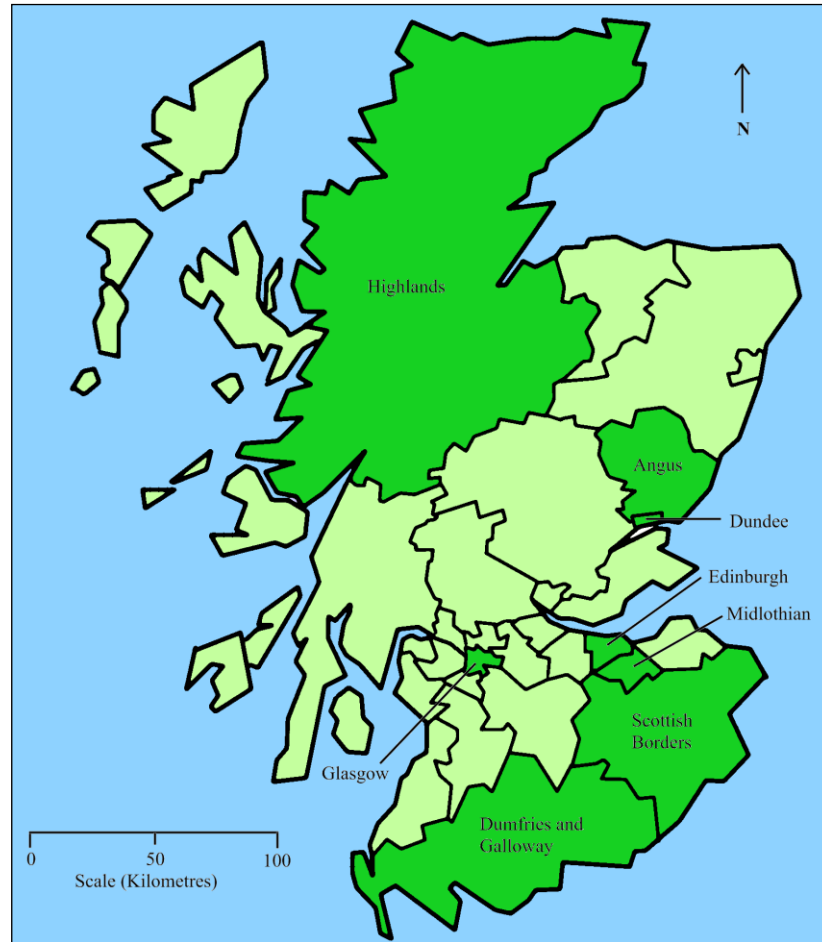
necessary to gain a snapshot of the groups that were active in Scotland. To do this, a database was constructed and a postal questionnaire was sent out to the identified groups. This process is explained below.

The database was constructed with a view to providing a list of environmental volunteering organisations that could be used to distribute the questionnaires. From this a typology of environmental volunteering organisations were developed and this then provided a basis for selecting case studies. A number of decisions were made regarding what areas of Scotland would be studied and which groups would be eligible for inclusion.

3.2.1 Selecting the areas

The purpose of the area selection was to gain a snapshot of the rapidly changing landscape in which environmental volunteer work was being conducted throughout Scotland at this time. To do this, eight council areas were selected to study. This is one quarter of the total amount of council areas and encompasses 36% of the Scottish population (according to the 2001 census) and 51% of the land area (much of this due to the large relative size of the Highlands).

Figure 3.2: Council divisions of Scotland, excluding the Shetland and Orkney Island council areas.



Source: Author's diagram.

The eight council divisions (labeled and highlighted in dark green in Figure 3.2) were selected for three reasons. Firstly, they give a broad geographical spread across the country. Secondly, they represent many different physical aspects of the Scottish landscape, from bare heather glens to wetlands and forestry and urban park lands. Finally, the councils were selected to try and give a balance between urban, near urban, rural, more remote and wilderness areas. It was theorised that these differences may impact different forms of active environmental volunteering and the prevalence of the volunteering that takes place. Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee are urban council areas with large population numbers that are based around the cities and were included so that volunteering activities that involve urban green spaces would be represented. Angus and Midlothian are both council divisions with a mix of both small town settlements and rural areas. The other three council divisions selected were the Highlands, Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish

Borders and have much higher land areas and lower population densities. They also provide very different landscapes within each of the regions, with areas of forestry, moorland, coastal and inland areas, as well as more remote wilderness locations. As well as operating within these areas the environmental volunteering groups also had to fit a set of criteria that is outlined in Section 3.2.4.

3.2.2 Compiling the database

There were a number of methods that were employed to try and find groups that would fit into the category of environmental volunteering organisations in the different areas. To begin with, other organisational databases were used that provided the contact details of volunteering organisations within Scotland, both local and national. These included:

- Community Groups in Scotland – British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
- Voluntary Sector Database – Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector
- Volunteer Centre Network Scotland

At this stage there was a reliance on how these databases and organisations defined environmental volunteer groups. When the final database was compiled, the groups that were included had to have individuals currently volunteering with them, they had to conduct some or all of their work in natural environments and they also had to have some form of ‘active’ physical tasks in these environments. As well as drawing on these databases, the Voluntary Centre Network listed the Volunteer Centre offices around Scotland and through phone calls and e-mail enquiries a number of useful contacts and groups were obtained. This was supplemented further from lists from a number of the council websites.

The importance of other less formal methods was also key. Communication with members within Greenspace Scotland, the Forestry Commission Scotland, BTCV, Volunteer Development Scotland and others provided an invaluable resource to ascertain more local knowledge of groups that were active in certain council areas. In addition to this, following up links between the groups themselves was important to try and use the local knowledge of the area, as opposed to just what was available on national databases and lists. Indeed, throughout the empirical gathering of data with the selected case study groups, inevitably, other groups would be mentioned that could not be found through the methods discussed above, suggesting more informal networks and structures within the groups.

Through these methods the database was made as comprehensive as possible. These groups, however, are often community based and pass in and out of activity, depending on projects and seasons. Therefore, it is difficult to say with any great confidence if all eligible groups have been included as, with any study of voluntary organisations, the list was provisional and partial. What can be said is that the database does provide an insight into the broad range of groups and projects that were working within Scotland at the time. The numbers of groups identified for the database in each area as well as the total number of national organisations are contained in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Database group numbers

Council region	Number of groups in each area
Angus	6
Dumfries and Galloway	7
Dundee	10
Edinburgh	27
Glasgow	14
Highlands	24
Midlothian	9
Scottish Borders	7
National organisations	22
Total	126

3.2.3 Designing the postal questionnaire

The questionnaire chosen for this study was a postal, self-completion questionnaire to be sent to the individual organisations that were identified through the database. The questionnaire was designed to gain information on the organisations themselves, the type of volunteering work that they undertake and the benefits that they feel their members gain from the work. Due to the diverse geographical areas involved, a postal questionnaire was selected.

This style of questionnaire not only made it easier to cover the different council areas in Scotland that were being studied but also reduced the amount of time and funds that was necessary to conduct these in person. The respondent in these cases were also given more time to complete the questionnaire and were not influenced by the presence or intonation of the researcher (McGuirk and O'Neill, 2005). Compared to other types of survey such as the personal and intercept surveys, the postal survey has been associated with lower response rates (Hoggart *et al.*, 2002: 176). To try and combat this a cover letter (Appendix

1) was sent along with the survey to highlight the interest that is now being given to the subject of environmental volunteering by the (then) Scottish Executive and the funding provided for this project by the ESRC and the Forestry Commission Scotland. A reply-paid envelope was included with each survey as well as the covering letter. To maximise response rates a follow-up phone call and/or e-mail was also sent to non-respondents (depending on available contact details) two weeks after sending the questionnaire.

The questionnaire (Appendix 2) was split into four sections. These sections are categorised in the Table 3.2, over the page, and the justification for their selection is outlined:

Table 3.2: Questionnaire structure

Questionnaire section	Question numbers	Topics	Relevant research areas
1	1-6	Organisation name and description. Role of organisation. Funding sources. Environmental area of work.	Organisation description and aims.
2	7-12	Numbers of paid staff and volunteers. Demographic description of volunteers. Shared characteristics of volunteers.	Ascertain the make-up and type of people who volunteer for the organisation.
3	13-16	Motivations for volunteers. Time given by volunteers. Activities undertaken by volunteers. Benefits gained by the volunteers.	Nature of volunteering. Experiences and meaning of volunteering.
4	17-21	Links to national environmental and volunteering organisations. Links with local/regional organisations. Awareness of Scottish Executive strategies and discussions.	Scope of the organisation. Awareness of relevant policy.

The questions were designed to help contribute to the main research areas and to decide which groups may be suitable to work with on a case study basis. Responses were completed predominantly by the chairperson or secretary of the group, depending on the contact details given. This means that as well as completing the questions on the make-up of the group, their personal views were also included, especially in respect to section three

on the motivations and experiences and meanings given to the volunteering. The questions and sections were based around the three forms of data and variable types (Parfitt, 2005). These relate to the nature of the volunteering organisation, the role that it sees itself fulfilling and the number of volunteers that it has. Behavioural data were also collected on volunteer activities, the characteristics of volunteers, and the links the organisation has with other environmental and volunteering bodies. Finally, data relating to attitudes, opinions and beliefs were collected. These are the hardest questions to quantify as they deal not only with the open questions but also those questions where the responses may be highly individual or emotive. In the survey, these questions included the subjects of peoples' motivations to volunteer, the benefits that can be gained from environmental volunteering and their views on the contribution of wider organisations and the (then) Scottish Executive on the work that they do. Sections two and three in the survey were most important when considering which of the organisations would be suitable to work with as case studies. In these sections it was possible to see not only the make-up of the volunteers but also the organisation's activities and views (from the individual completing the questionnaire) on the importance of environmental volunteering and what effects it has on the volunteers.

In practice, due to the nature of an individual answering for an organisation, often feedback could be either fragmented or giving personal opinion. For example, volunteer numbers were often estimated, and further feedback provided opinions of the volunteer completing the questionnaire that did not necessarily reflect the view of the full group.

Prior to the main survey, the questionnaire was piloted. The survey was sent out to eight environmental volunteering groups from different council areas in Scotland to the ones studied. Three of these surveys were sent back (a response rate of 37.5%). The pilot survey resulted in some minor amendments to the spacing provided for participant

answers. This offered the participants more scope to express views, such as in questions 16(i) and 18(i) where further feedback could be provided on the benefits and drawbacks of the volunteering experience.

The main questionnaire was then administered. A total response rate of 48.1% was achieved, providing 50 returns from the 104 questionnaires distributed. This is broken down by council area in Table 3.3. Two of the postal responses were also discounted as they no longer conducted environmental volunteering projects.

Table 3.3: Questionnaire response rates for each council region

Council region	Number of questionnaires sent	Number of responses	Response rate (%)
Angus	6	5	83
Dumfries and Galloway	7	3	43
Dundee	10	5	50
Edinburgh	27	13	48
Glasgow	14	6	43
Highlands	24	12	50
Midlothian	9	3	33
Scottish Borders	7	3	43
Total	104	50	48

It can be noted that of these 104 questionnaires, five were sent by e-mail with three responses from these. The overall response rate was very favourable compared with other studies. Hoggart *et al.* (2002) cite 40% as a very good response rate from a postal questionnaire, with the possibility to build on this through follow-up contact (May, 2001). To compare the response rate to other studies with voluntary and community organisations, Maloney *et al.* (2000) received a 30% response rate from members on the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council list. In addition to this Fyfe and Milligan (2003) received a 24%

response rate from voluntary organisations in Glasgow. Wolch (1990) attained a 14% response rate from a survey of London voluntary organisations that was designed to inform subsequent interviews. These comparative studies illustrate the strength of the response rate received in this study.

These responses provided a snapshot of the active environmental volunteering groups in the study areas. Results of the questionnaire are discussed in Chapter 4. It was from this strategic and balanced council area selection and questionnaire response analysis that the case studies were initially selected.

3.2.4 Selection of ethnographic case studies

Each volunteer group had to meet a number of criteria before being considered as a case study group. These criteria were set in two different ways. Firstly, a range of theoretical driven criteria were used that draws upon the definitions associated with environmental work in the literature. Secondly, the range of responses provided in the questionnaire made it possible to consider where the case study groups were positioned in the spectrum of active environmental volunteering. These two forms of criteria are outlined in the rest of this section, leading to the final selection of case study groups.

The case study groups had to work in ‘natural environments’ and it is useful here to define this so as to understand its future use. This term is frequently used problematically, often suggesting that a natural environment is ‘undeveloped, untouched and that the social or human-made world is largely absent’ (Hinchliffe, 2007: 10). Cronon (1996) even suggests that framing the term ‘wilderness’ as a people-less place threatens livelihoods and landscapes. The work of environmental volunteering groups, involving social interaction and volunteer work in these landscapes, therefore negate these places as people-less.

Indeed, it is the particular human interaction with and within nature that filters into the research questions on both social and emotional well-being. Questions have been raised over the idea of ‘nature out there’ (Hinchliffe, 2007) as opposed to humans being part of nature. Again there is a need for ‘landscaping’ (Wylie, 2007) as a way to complicate simple human-nature interactions and to understand the relationship this has with an engagement with well-being. In the thesis, ‘wilderness’ is used to describe more remote areas, those that involve travelling to and removing oneself from the everyday. This is particularly apparent for groups operating in those regions of higher land area but low population density such as the Highlands, the Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway. In addition to this, the term ‘green space’ is used to describe areas of ‘vegetated land or water within or adjoining an urban area’ (Greenspace Scotland, 2009). This includes urban parks and grassed areas, green corridors, countryside that is adjoining to urban areas and also derelict land that is being reclaimed by vegetation and has the potential of transformation. The term natural environment is going to be used to define all these areas, from wilderness to urban green spaces and each of the case study groups must incorporate at least part of their active volunteering within these environments. This highlights that ‘nature’ does not always have to be located in a ‘wilderness’ or distant place, but can be found in local and urban areas.

To usefully work with these terms and define the active environmental volunteering to be used, the definition below is being utilised:

‘active volunteering undertaken for a range of motives in relation to the natural outdoors. As such it is concerned with volunteering relating for example to environmental, wildlife, recreation and conservation issues, but not directly with volunteering which happens to be undertaken in the countryside but which does not relate specifically to the natural outdoors

(for example volunteering concerned with formal sport, faith organisations, the built environment, health or social care).’

(CRN Report, 2008: 8)

Therefore, this form of active volunteering would include working in any wilderness area or green space around a town or city. For example, a ‘Friends of’ group that helped with the maintenance and upkeep of a city park would be included, but a group that planted and distributed floral baskets on a city street would not. In other words, the surroundings had to be in some way ‘green’ or ‘natural’, not just the activity. This was necessary to try and ascertain the mental well-being that can be gained from volunteering in these areas and also understand the embodied experience more fully.

The group also had to include ‘active’ volunteers working within them. It was not enough to be conducting a survey of bird populations in a park or recording plant species beside a loch. Instead, there had to be present some form of physical activity, whether it be planting trees or clearing litter. This was to try and analyse the physical well-being and more embodied and multi-sensory encounters that were experienced while conducting this work.

A range of continuums were constructed to represent the range of responses that were received from the postal questionnaire. These were used to help inform the case study group selection.

Table 3.4: Spectra of case study group criteria

Urban green space	↔	Wilderness space
Local neighbourhood volunteers	↔	Travelling volunteers
Large number of volunteers	↔	Small number of volunteers
Return volunteers	↔	‘One-off’ volunteers
Woodland focus	↔	Broad environmental focus
Weekly tasks	↔	Residential work weeks

Each spectrum in Table 3.4 is labeled with the two extreme ends of the range. These spectra particularly encompass criteria around the volunteer make-up, the landscapes of the volunteering, what tasks are being undertaken and the rhythm of the group activity. These were identified as criteria that would give a balanced picture of the range of environmental volunteering groups that were active in these areas at the time. The first spectrum encapsulates the landscape of the volunteering tasks from urban green spaces, through to wilderness spaces. The second shows the range of participating volunteers, from those who volunteer in areas adjacent to or close to their homes, through to those who have to travel to the volunteering location. The third spectrum represents the numbers who volunteer for each group. This ranges from a small number (below 20) to a large number (above 100). The fourth spectrum shows the balance between those volunteers who return to the group regularly and those who volunteer only once. The spectrum on woodland activity was included to make sure that tree and forest contact was encompassed within the case studies. This was to assist in gathering responses and interactions with trees that could feed directly into the Forestry Commission Scotland, who partly funded the research. The final spectrum, illustrates the various rhythms and forms of the volunteer tasks. These can be task days that occur very regularly (on a weekly basis) or those that only occur in the form a residential work-week. The selection of the case study groups therefore were designed to be spread across these spectra. This resulted in the following case study groups being selected:

Table 3.5: Case study groups.

Organisation	Volunteering location	Volunteer base	Possibility of community links	Number of volunteers	Volunteering rhythm	Woodland activity
Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP)	Wilderness	Remote volunteers	Lower	Large	Residential work-weeks (run March-November)	Major
Friends of Southside Park (FSP)	Urban	Local residents	Higher	Small	Monthly task days and community event days	Part
Community Environmental Group (CEG)	Semi-rural	Local residents	Higher	Small	Monthly task days and community event days	Part
Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV)	Rural	Local region residents	Higher	Medium	Weekly task days and residential weekends	Part
Natural Space Action (NSA)	Urban	Local residents	Higher	Medium	Fortnightly task days and community event days	Part

These groups cover a range of positions within each of the spectra. The groups were spread across Scotland and they operated in a range of locations across the urban, semi-rural, rural and wilderness continuum. The volunteers from across the groups were a mix of local neighbourhood residents (CEG, FSP and NSA), volunteers from the regional area (EEV) and also remote volunteers that travel from other areas of the UK and even abroad (SFRP). Each group also had a possibility of community involvement, be it lower with SFRP. The groups varied in size from a small number of volunteers (below 20) to hundreds (if all the individual volunteers on SFRP work-weeks were included). Tasks and events are carried out in a range of situations, across days, weekends and weeks, along different rhythms throughout the year. Finally, particular consideration was given to the presence of tree and

woodland activity with each group having at least some woodland involvement to feed into the interests of the Forestry Commission Scotland. The following case study group descriptions are based on the information in Table 3.5 but also give a little more detail in order to help understand the reasons for undertaking this particular ethnographic strategy. A more detailed group description and discussion will be included in Chapter 4. Each group has been given a pseudonym to help retain confidentiality and anonymity.

a) Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP)

This group was based in the Scottish Highlands. The group's primary aim was to regenerate and restore the Caledonian pine forest in the Highlands, mainly through tree planting but also through non-native tree and plant removal, as well as the reintroduction of other plant and animal species that are viewed as native. The work with this particular group was different from any of the other groups due to the set-up of using 'work-weeks'. Work-weeks were advertised via their web site and individual volunteers signed up to a specific location that was associated with specific tasks before their week begins. There were ten volunteers on each work-week and two SFRP staff members (facilitators) who led the group. Volunteers on the weeks stayed together in SFRP rented accommodation, be it lodges or chalets. Each work-week often consisted of different volunteers. Volunteers, in most cases, did not know each other before the week unless they signed up as friends or couples. Some came as repeat volunteers, others on a one-off basis. The work sites tended to be in more 'wilderness' areas, involving a wide range of physical tasks from tree planting to seed collection.

b) Friends of Southside Park (FSP)

FSP were a local community organisation who worked throughout the year on small projects and continuous maintenance work within an urban park in Glasgow. The main core of the group were also relatively small, with ten committee members who were local residents. This provided an opportunity to build up longer term relationships with the group and the volunteers. A larger number of repeat visits were necessary to observe and participate with their activities as well as to attend committee meetings and fun days that the group organised in the park. Task days would run on a loosely monthly basis but this would often vary, depending on seasons and weather. This type of ethnographic work therefore took a longer period of time to build up relationships and understandings with those that organise the activities, as well as those that take part.

c) Community Environmental Group (CEG)

Community Environment Group was based in a small town community in eastern Scotland. There was a committee of ten members and also a part-time worker who was a strong driver behind the group, coordinating many of the activities, securing funding and chairing the committee meetings and AGMs. The group worked on the basis that members of the local community approach the group with an environmental interest or concern and the group considered how and whether they could take the idea forward. This approach resulted in a whole range of diverse interest groups that worked through CEG. These included eco-poetry groups, youth and toddler groups, a solstice celebration group and also a wide range of different projects that were in various stages. There was a strong focus on outputs, in terms of making DVDs of projects, producing leaflets, making t-shirts, and holding community events. In addition to this they also strived to impact on spaces across

the local area, be it with litter clearing, improving access, planting trees or putting in functional sculpture or environmental art in local green spaces.

d) Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV)

EEV also have a committee of ten people, each with different duties from chairperson to tools manager. They drew their volunteers from around the Edinburgh and Midlothian regions. They ran Sunday task days throughout the year for ten to twelve people at a time and also organised one or two residential weekends to more distant locations. On Sunday tasks, a minibus collected the volunteers from a central location and transported them to a task site in the local region, usually no more than a 45 minute drive away. The majority of volunteers were committee members or return volunteers, with the occasional new member. The work was conducted in conjunction with various landowners, ranging from the Forestry Commission, to the RSPB and other private owners who asked EEV to complete specific tasks for them. The days encompassed a whole range of tasks; these included tree planting and thinning, wetland restoration, seed collection and litter picking. As well as the active environmental volunteer tasks, they also organised more social events such as dinners and dances at various times throughout the year.

e) Natural Space Action (NSA)

This was a group based in a Scottish city that was formed by an individual who had returned from a SFRP work-week. The individual wanted to continue environmental work in his home area so he set up this group to reclaim an area of derelict green space surrounded by tenement buildings near his home. The long-term vision was to turn the space into a multi-use community garden and green space by the introduction of raised vegetable beds, bat boxes and green recreation areas. The first volunteer tasks were

organised through posting flyers and posters in the local area and starting up a website for the group. The initial event attracted over 30 volunteers and a 'Big Lunch' event the following summer attracted around 130 participants. The group is now a registered charity with a chairperson (the original founder), a treasurer and one other trustee who are all local residents. The group had, in a relatively short period of time, taken on a necessarily politicised role as well, as the land they were working on is owned by the council. This had resulted in various legal actions and threats and this will be further investigated in subsequent chapters.

After selecting the case study groups to work with, an ethnographic research strategy was employed to answer the specific research questions of the thesis.

3.3 Conducting the ethnographic research strategy

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the methods that were decided upon were ones that have been used in human geography to study particularly emotional and embodied practices. This ethnographic strategy was designed to build complementary methods that would be able to unravel and reveal these volunteer experiences. The complex social and personal interactions that the research questions engaged with required a range of methods to be employed over a lengthy period of time. Consequently, the empirical work was conducted over fourteen months and within a range of temporal and rhythmic patterns that were discussed in Section 3.2.5. It is important now to briefly outline these ethnographic methods and discuss the particular reasons for employing each one and how they were conducted with the case study groups to form a cohesive strategy. Here I explain the first approach taken to the ethnography and how participant observation (3.3.1) combined with interviews and focus groups (3.3.2); attendance at committee meetings (3.3.3) and participant photography (3.3.4) were used to answer the research

questions. Finally, the analytical strategy is discussed (3.3.5). Table 3.6 shows the work that was conducted with each case study group.

Table 3.6: Group work

Group	Participant observation in active environmental volunteering	Interviews with volunteers	Focus groups	Other
Scottish Forest Regeneration Project	28 days (140 hours work time)	35	1 'sharing'	Meals and lunches with other volunteers. Staying at volunteer B+B.
Eastern Environmental Volunteers	8 days (42 hours work time)	5	1	
Community Environmental Group	4 days (16 hours work time)	7	1	8 committee meetings. 1 AGM. 1 group day out. 1 project launch.
Friends of Southside Park	4 days (20 hours work time)	6	1	9 committee meetings. 1 'park walk'. 1 fun day. 'Clean Glasgow' launch.
Natural Space Action	4 days (12 hours work time)	2		Court attendance. 'Big Lunch' day.
Totals	48 days (230 hours)	55	4	

3.3.1 Participant observation and keeping a field diary

Participant observation took the form of becoming a volunteer with each of the case study groups. This method involved attending tasks and taking part in the activities as a member of the group. This could take the form of a short afternoon task, day and weekend activities or even residential weeks. The activities participated in included tree planting and felling, fence removal, seed collection, drainage ditch digging, litter picking, weeding, non-native vegetation removal, painting park buildings, bird feeding, constructing vegetable beds and

tree nursery work. The research was spread over a period of fourteen months, with there being periods of quiet, interspersed with periods of fervent activity. This gave the opportunity to get to know how the groups work, build relationships and trust with individual members within the group and also observe as well as experience the active volunteering work.

Participant observation was employed to record and begin to decipher a fuller understanding of the volunteer experience that encompassed 'the full sensory experience of being in a place' (Kearns, 2000: 120). This was in an attempt to move beyond a sole reliance on more formalised interactions, such as interviews and focus groups, to a more flexible way of observing the spontaneity and richness of everyday interactions in the course of the active environmental volunteering. This would, for example, take in volunteer conversations, where volunteers ate lunch, moments of quiet and observations of exhaustion or elation, as well as the actual embodied practices of active volunteering. The participant observation could then be used to feed into the interviews and focus groups, but crucially, this material also provided insight into the embodied experiences of the volunteering. The extended excerpt, below, from the field diary illustrates some of the active and embodied aspects of volunteering practice:

'Once lunch is over I make a point to try and work closer to a couple of the members who I notice have been working in more isolated areas. I try and do this discreetly so I choose a location that is slightly upslope and not intrusive. Terry is working quite a distance away on his own and Joyce is doing much the same thing about 50 yards further along the glen from him and I struggle to see her too well. Terry seems to like to talk to himself quite a lot and comment on the tree that he is felling. He doesn't stop for the 15 minutes that I can see him and I hear the phrases 'come on' and 'nearly there' as well as a number of grunts and groans of exertion. I don't think he can see me very well but we are within earshot. Once I have felled the tree I was working on I move along to see what Joyce is doing. I keep my distance upslope and she is a good distance further down. When I see her she is having a cigarette and looks like she is sizing up a tree she is about to fell by giving it a bit of a push and clearing any obstacles that will get in the way. She finishes her cigarette and starts to trim the excess branches and saw the trunk. She is clearly putting in a lot of effort and it takes her a good five minutes to fell the tree.'

(EEV field diary)

These observations provided the opportunity to reflect on the bodily encounters, the moments of rest and exertion that are shown by Joyce in the excerpt. The momentary and fleeting nuances of experience are ones that are harder to capture within a more formalised interview or focus group setting and they were often not just on the part of an individual, but also involved social interactions between volunteers and the researcher:

'Evan is sitting near us and both Evan and Iain joke about the cuts and bruises that I have on my arms. I had taken off my fleece and discovered that short sleeves and tree-felling do not mix well. Evan mentions injuries that he has had to his hands before doing similar tasks but says that it gives him 'happy memories' to see his old scars. Other volunteers that know each other are talking about one of the group's new flat trouble with their boiler and kitchen. A couple of them offer to help and go over for a look at the flat. People are passing round biscuits and commenting on how good the tea is.'

(EEV field diary)

Such swapping of experience and knowledge between volunteers could be captured by using the participant observation field notes. As well as this, the importance of the social experience of the volunteering itself and the wider social capital that is built begins to emerge. These encounters happened throughout the task days and provided the opportunity to answer the research questions more directly, especially those concerned with nature relation, emotional and embodied well-being and social capital. The friendship building and reinforcement that are apparent in the above excerpt show some of these encounters that can be observed. The embodiment of injuries and scars indicate happy memories from when those scars were acquired. These are discussions and events that could be observed but also participated in through the task days.

The skills of talking, listening, observing and then recording this information were central. During these task days I would record short notes on a notepad or read aloud quotes that I had overheard or interesting points into the dictaphone that I carried with me. This was used, for example, to relate the reaction of a volunteer into the dictaphone when he described the smell of a juniper bush as being like ‘air freshener’ and to make verbal and written notes on volunteer reactions. However, even this was not always possible and the skills of recollection and writing up a full diary at the end of each day were imperative. As can be seen in the field diary excerpt, and from the way that the note-taking was conducted ‘out of sight’, there was a degree of covert research going on, albeit within the context of all the participants being informed overtly of my role. This was primarily to reduce adjusted behaviour by the participants that might occur due to a researcher being present.

‘Terry mentioned that he should ‘behave himself’ when I was around in case he got into trouble. I think that he meant in terms of not following some of the health and safety aspects of tree felling but I got the impression that it was at least partly meant in good humour.’

(EEV field diary)

This issue was also tackled by many return visits on other volunteer days and tasks to build relationships, trust and the normality of a researcher being there as a participating volunteer. This was not an even process across the case study groups, with each providing distinctive challenges. The changing relations encountered with both groups and individuals and the ethical challenges this raised are discussed in Section 3.4.

Building on recent geographical work on visual methodologies (Rose, 2001; Pink, 2001; Latham, 2003) participant photography was also used to ‘take a longer look’ (Chaplain, 2004: 43) at the visual experiences expressed by some of the volunteers. This follows on from the idea of the diary-photograph method discussed by Latham (2003) to help illustrate individual experiences of the everyday. During my initial ethnographic studies it became clear that one of the emerging themes on the initial and continuing motivations to volunteer in natural environments was that of aesthetic appreciation. This ranged from a visual enjoyment of Scottish glens and mountains to the pleasure taken from volunteering in a city park on a misty morning. I therefore asked a number of return (regular) volunteers from each group to take photographs of what they viewed as important to their volunteering, the reasons for their returning. I asked them to send me these photographs with a short narration on why they took the particular shot and what they were thinking when they did so. This was to reduce the subjectivity of my own interpretation of the photographs but also to encourage the volunteers to reflect on their experiences. This also gave the opportunity for ‘satellite’ volunteers to record their experiences of their volunteering. These are volunteers who conduct more informal volunteering either on their own or with only one or two others. This method was, therefore, used to integrate with the participant observation and also to provide a different way for volunteers to visually represent and narrate their experiences. The use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to build on the participant observation and photography.

3.3.2 Interviewing and focus group work

To extend the ethnographic strategy by exploring and recording personal volunteer encounters, semi-structured interviews were conducted. These were designed to gain insight into individual experiences feelings and opinions. The participant observation contributed to bridging the gap between the lived experience and that which is communicated to the researcher, but also assisted me in adjusting the original interview schedule (Appendix 3) to ask individuals about specific events or experiences that had been observed. The interview schedule was structured to firstly cover personal details of the volunteer and motivations the individual had to volunteer in that particular group. This would often encompass their volunteering ‘story’ and was designed to uncover influences on them being involved in this particularly environmental and voluntary pursuit. The basics of their volunteering commitment in terms of time given and their own role within the group were also covered to begin to ascertain how they viewed their own position as a volunteer. The questions then became more probing, looking at continuing motivations (why do they come back), what they feel they gain from their volunteering and more detailed questions on their relationship with the landscape, the tasks that they undertake and the social relations at both a personal and community level. Over time the interview schedule was used only as a template to cover general areas as I became more confident in both the interviewing process and also the themes that had to be covered. Some volunteers would speak almost uninterrupted for over an hour, while others required much more direction. Overall, 52 interviews were conducted with volunteers across the case study groups, with 55 individuals taking part.

Interviewees were recruited through the initial participant observation. Where possible, interviews were conducted after a number of task days with an individual. This was in an attempt to build rapport and trust to encourage the interviewees to be more open in what is

an unusual social encounter for some. This gave more scope for gaining insight into complex behaviours and motivations in their environmental volunteering and it also assisted in tailoring questions to particular experiences or events that the group and/or the individual had been involved. In some cases, however, this movement from an informal volunteer relationship to a formal interview could still be problematic. The appearance of a dictaphone and a consent form would bring an official tone to a previously social, active and task based relationship. This would usually take the form of interest though and the participants were usually put at ease through the loosely structured interview course. The term 'well-being' was not directly used in the interview questions. These questions were designed to encourage the volunteers to discuss the impacts of their volunteering in more indirect ways, seeking the explanation and relevance to come from the interviewee, as opposed to the interviewer. It must be noted, however, that the participants had already read the Individual Participant Information Sheet that outlined the broad aims of the thesis, including the focus on well-being.

For all the groups other than Scottish Forest Regeneration Project², interviews and the focus groups that were conducted had to be organised at a time that was convenient to each individual. These were organised on an individual basis and took place in a number of different locations; volunteer homes, coffee shops, libraries, workplaces and even the university department staff room. Even the individual interviews were often difficult to organise. Volunteers would have to give up their own time, often after work or at the weekend. This would have to be done after obtaining their trust and confidence. In addition, the diverse locations of the groups across Scotland also required a large amount of travelling. This restriction of time resulted in two of the interviews being conducted with married couples as opposed to on an individual basis. This had advantages in that the

² The SFRP ethnographic work involved staying with volunteers on a residential work-week so the interviews and the focus group were conducted in the evenings after task days. These were therefore either carried out in the accommodation or in a local pub.

couple would often feel more comfortable and confident in discussing their experiences as in both instances they joined the group at the same time. Care had to be taken, however, to spread the conversation evenly and avoid one individual leading the conversation too strongly, although it was inevitable that the term 'we' was used more than the term 'I' in these cases.

In addition to the interviews, a number of focus groups were used to discuss similar issues to those in the interviews but this setting encouraged more open conversation, argument and debate between small groups of volunteers. The focus group has become a more widespread method used by human geographers in the last two decades (see Area, 1996: Vol. 28). Townsend (2006) used focus group work to study the social capital/social connectedness of a preservation group in Melbourne and their experiences of health and well-being. Burgess *et al.* (1988) also used this method to explore people's environmental viewpoints. I attempted to answer similar questions to these through these case studies. As a facilitator I encouraged debate and interaction that resulted in chained responses and the fluid shifting of topics, while at the same time trying to cover the points highlighted in the focus group schedule (Appendix 4). In addition to the themes covered in the interviews, the focus group schedule also focused on the importance that volunteers placed on the group work and cooperation. This was aimed at moving from individual experience to group and community experience, using the focus group format to discuss these ideas. Individuals were also stimulated or given more confidence in such a setting, especially when surrounded by other volunteers that they knew. As with the interviews, questions were tailored to the specific groups and events and tasks that they had been involved in. This resulted in understanding useful and contrasting views within the one group, that often did not emerge so strongly when the group was presenting themselves as a united front. With the aid of initial participant observation experience, I was also able to elicit more detailed

responses and nuanced accounts. Four focus groups were conducted with a total of 24 participants.

Organising focus groups was particularly problematic. The SFRP focus group consisted of recording a 'sharing'. This is when each member of the work-week discusses their own expectations, experiences and hopes for the week to the rest of the group. This was conducted on my first volunteer work-week with a group that were comfortable with this being recorded. To organise focus groups with the other groups was the biggest challenge. Getting more than a couple of members together at the same time, in a suitable environment for a focus group also required a lot of organising. The nature of the group volunteers coming together for task days or meetings then returning to their homes made it very hard to coordinate. In the case of Friends of Southside Park, the focus group consisted of myself and only three other members, on a Friday evening, in one of the participants houses. In the case of Natural Space Action, there were only two organising individuals in the group that were interviewed and the volunteers on the task days turned up, participated for a few hours, then returned home. This made it difficult to build relationships here and also obtain trust (as well as contact details). This is why there was no focus group for NSA and illustrates the practical difficulty in organising the focus groups. Nevertheless, a total of 55 interview participants and 24 focus group participants across the five case study groups provided a strong representation and diversity of the experiences within active environmental volunteering. The transcripts of these interviews and focus groups were used to explore the themes of the research questions and to enrich the participant observation. The analytical strategy is discussed in Section 3.3.4. It was apparent that the actual active volunteer tasks encompassed only one aspect of the environmental volunteering that was taking place.

3.3.3 *Committee meeting attendance*

Attendance at group events and committee meetings emerged as a method of group observation and data collection that became very important in my dealings with and understandings of some of the volunteering groups, particularly Friends of Southside Park and Community Environmental Group. Sobels *et al.* (2001) highlight the importance of attending meetings such as these during their research with landcare groups in Australia and used these meeting notes to frame interview questions. In the case of this research, these meetings were the most regular contact between the group members of CEG and FSP. The notes and observations from these meetings helped to identify issues that were particularly important to the group and also discover central figures in the group and the roles that they filled. It was often in these meetings that particular volunteer skills would become apparent that could not be utilised in the active environmental volunteering tasks. These included skills such as mediation, minute taking, word processing and submitting funding applications. These are all areas of the volunteer work that are necessary but not initially obvious from the participant observation on task days. This space was also the group forum to elect committee members, update others on progress on particular issues or express feelings of worry or angst. In a way this was the background of the group, the engine room.

The tasks and activities are the end product and the overall focus, but these meetings provided the drive for the group to operate. The organisation of social functions and informal chats and connections were often made before, during or after these meetings. Insights could subsequently be acquired about not only the group tasks and activities, but also the social relationships within the groups. These relationships and the level of involvement in all aspects of the group were often highlighted and would give insight into the individual well-being that was associated with particular types of involvement in the

volunteer group. It was often the organisational aspects of the volunteer work that had the potential of providing stressful demands on particular volunteers, especially those taking on key roles. Attendance at these meetings supplied the opportunity to observe how volunteers interacted with the group beyond the active environmental task days. In addition to this, it was possible to examine how a wider form of volunteer involvement contributed to their well-being through their role and responsibilities within the group.

3.3.4 Analytical strategy

The analysis of the data was carried out to attempt to identify patterns and trends that run through the data. A coding strategy was employed with the interview, focus group and field diary transcripts. An initial ten interview transcripts were openly coded (Strauss, 1987), using the research questions, the literature review and the responses themselves to identify categories that could be usefully applied. The rest of the transcripts were then coded using these initial codes, but also building upon and informing these. Identified trends were explored through axial and selective coding (Strauss, 1987). The axial coding followed a particular line of enquiry to find relationships and similarities. Using selective coding, themes were identified and ‘coding trees’ were used to develop the relationships around these themes. This was an ongoing process, constantly being evaluated as other data was added, creating a process that was ‘circular, sporadic and, frankly, messy’ (Cope, 2003: 451).

The software package NVivo8 was used to aid in the analysis of these materials. The transcripts are imported into as ‘sources’ and can then be coded with ‘nodes’. A whole range of queries and models can then be conducted within NVivo once the transcripts had been coded. One example of this is the coding tree model for initial motivations to volunteer that can be found in Appendix 5. This shows the ‘tree node’ of initial volunteer

motivations that filters into a whole set of diverse motivations. The majority of these are descriptive codes (Welsh, 2002) or in vivo codes (Cope, 2003) that have been taken from the participant responses. These would include actual volunteer phrases. For example, when discussing visual experiences of particular natural environments, the volunteer responses of 'beautiful', 'be in the wild' and 'see more of Scotland' were used. More analytic codes (Cope, 2003) were then applied to the data after reviewing the literature and research questions again. These analytic codes were then related to participant responses. To continue the example of visual experiences of natural environments, analytic codes would emerge from the descriptive codes. The responses given above were included under aesthetic appreciation, attachment to place and linked to ideas of immersion in nature. Both these descriptive and analytic codes were coded alongside each other. NVivo would also show the number of sources that one particular code was found within, as well as giving the number of instances across all the sources. This was particularly useful in identifying recurring themes. It was these themes that helped structure the empirical chapters of the thesis. This was established through reading across the material (with the help of using NVivo) rather than just reading within the material (Jackson, 2001). This would involve analysis beyond just the direct relationships but also how individuals spoke about certain experiences across all the data. For example, it became apparent that multi-sensory experiences were important in the volunteering but volunteers would speak very differently about their encounters, making it necessary to read across the material and the language used to distinguish trends, similarities and differences.

Cope (2003) outlines a number of challenges of analysing the data in this way. Firstly, she argues that codes must be fluid throughout the analysis, some may need to be built upon and others disregarded. This was part of the process of refining the codes and consolidating some when necessary. Secondly, there is the issue of reviewing interpretations of the data. Cope suggests that this could be negotiated by presenting some of the coding back to the

participants to see if they find it accurate. Although this was not carried out rigorously in this study, themes were reviewed with some volunteers through post interview or focus group discussions. In some instances participants were surprised by their own responses when presented back to them in a coded form. One participant was presented with the codes that made the link between childhood experience and current environmental volunteering interests. Although not having made the explicit connection themselves in such a way, they did confirm the link. This informed the analysis by showing how the participant volunteers do not always seek to make links between seemingly disparate parts of their volunteering or wider life. Thirdly, Cope argues one should take account of the silences, hesitations and gestures within the transcripts. This relates back to the point on reading across the material but also reading into it. These moments of pause and thought were also important in the field diary observations and were included in the transcripts, as well as just the words that were used. The transcript would indicate, where appropriate, the situations that these were formed, be it in recollection, confusion, anger, happiness or upset. Finally, the issue of researcher positionality is questioned. Cope suggests that participants may hold back in certain situations. The ethnographic strategy overall was designed to combat this, with data not only coming from the more formal spoken word, but also from the field diary observations and participations and the use of the participant photography. Nevertheless, issues of positionality are discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.3.

The participant photographs and narratives were not analysed within NVivo. This was partly due to the nature of this material. It was from a relatively small number of return volunteers (ten in total) and not fully representative across all the groups and participants. The themes that emerged from the photographs and narratives were, however, coded separately and interlinked with the code trees that were built within NVivo. Notes were also taken about the context in which the photograph was taken, whether it was during a

particular volunteer experience, as part of a group task or on an individual basis. Issues of temporality and situation were therefore taken into account (Pink, 2001). These photographs could therefore not be considered as 'stand alone' but combined with the other input from those individuals. For example, a photograph may be best understood when combined with an individual's particular motivations to volunteer that were discussed in an interview or focus group. As with the transcripts these images are 'separated from the world of action in which they were meaningful and placed in a world in which they will be interrogated and interpreted from a multiplicity of different perspectives' (Morphy and Banks, 1997: 16). The challenge is to retain the meaning of the photograph (the meaning that was attributed by the volunteer) but also to contextualise this material within the thesis. This was partly achieved through the narratives but also used to complement the other ethnographic strategies that were used.

3.4 Ethics, positionality, emotions and embodiment

The active environmental volunteering tasks themselves involved embodied and emotional characteristics, as did the aspects of social and personal well-being that are formed around the volunteering. These characteristics were deliberately explored through the research questions and required a high level of consideration and reflection. The challenges and opportunities that were presented by the ethnographic strategy provided distinctive ethical and positional considerations that will be considered with regards to both the participants and also the researcher. This involves considering the ethical positions of the participants and their environmental and volunteering ethics, but also an ethic of care to be given by the researcher to the participants. This section will begin by explaining how the participant and group information was anonymised and the use of informed consent (3.4.1); discuss issues of participant emotions and ethics through an ethics of care (3.4.2); consider the challenges of researcher ethics, experience and performance (3.4.3) and looking at embodying

environmental ethics in research practice (3.4.4). Finally, the effect of the studentship being an ESRC-CASE project with the Forestry Commission will be discussed (3.4.5).

3.4.1 Group consent, informed consent and anonymisation

In each case the case study groups and the individuals themselves have been anonymised. Both groups and individuals have been assigned pseudonyms. This has been done with a view to remove individual identifiers but there are necessarily contextual identifiers such as that in some of the photography and group locations that are still present. The descriptions of the tasks and landscapes that the groups operate within were central to describe and explain the volunteer experiences and these do provide some indication as to the group identity if the reader knew the field and had the inclination to research the matter further. This is where the two stages of anonymisation are useful as, even if the groups were identifiable, then the individuals were also given pseudonyms.

3.4.2 Practising an ethics of care

To position myself within the research is inherently a messy and complex procedure (McDowell, 1992; Rose, 1997; Parr, 1998). Although it is impossible to be completely knowing and transparent about the relationship between myself and the research subjects, I have, as outlined by Katz (1994), attempted to consider all the participants in this project. This has included myself, the volunteer groups and individuals, but also to some extent, my funders in the ESRC and the Forestry Commission. I did this by firstly disseminating the progress of my work back to the volunteer groups, through both presentation and personal communications. I provided feedback to the Forestry Commission and the ESRC through six-monthly reports and presentations and attendance at a number of events. I would also provide transcripts or recordings of interviews to the interviewee if they so

wished. Finally, I personally could take satisfaction from my own volunteering contribution. I would enjoy the physical and environmental ethical aspects of the tasks, but also the social interaction with members of the volunteering groups.

The research questions are explicitly dealing with issues of emotion and well-being. Specifically dealing with ethics of care (McDowell, 2004) there is the opportunity here to expand the social sites that might be considered subject to moral, ethical and political judgement. Katz describes the idea of social reproduction as ‘the fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life’ (2001: 711). This can have political-economic, cultural, and environmental aspects. Social reproduction has more recently been theorised as a landscape of care, suffused with affect and emotion (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). As Popke (2006) puts it:

‘care is more than simply a social relation with moral or ethical dimensions; it can also be the basis for an alternative ethical standpoint, with implications for how we view traditional notions of citizenship’

(Popke, 2006: 506)

This leads into issues around ethical and ecological citizenship, central themes within environmental volunteering. Underlying initial motivations to volunteer would often stem from a particular personal ethical belief in environmental stewardship, care, or responsibility. There was therefore present in the research not only an ethic of care to be given *to* the participants by the researcher, but also an ethic of care being given *by* the participants to their volunteering. Due to this underlying ethic of commitment by participants, interviews would often raise sensitive subjects that the participant was emotionally involved and invested in. The emotional involvement and disclosure could also go a step further than this. Some volunteer experiences would draw out strong

emotions that were sometimes uncomfortable to discuss, in some cases involving the death of a parent or a recent relationship breaking down. These may even have been the volunteer's motivation to take part in the environmental volunteering. Although the research looked to capture these emotions and experiences, the interviews did not encompass anything approaching a psychoanalytic approach, nor did I have the training to be able to do such a thing. Some interviewees did express their enjoyment of being interviewed as a way to think about certain aspects of their volunteering more fully, or just to be given the forum to speak. In a small number of cases, the interviewee was visibly becoming upset by the route that their volunteering experience (and therefore their interview answers) were beginning to take. Care had to be taken in some cases to not play the role of 'psychiatrist researcher' and to steer the interviews in less upsetting directions. Often interviewees would ask questions about their more personal responses: Do you hear that a lot? Is that a bit weird? What do you think? I was sometimes asked for advice about certain answers to questions or dilemmas that had come up for the individual in the course of the interview that I felt I was not able to answer. This would happen most commonly with volunteers that I had shared a short-term and intense residential volunteering experience with. Those who I built longer term relationships with would be more aware of my background (both academically and personally) and be less likely to ask questions around 'personal advice'. I could offer reassurance or support in terms of listening but when I felt issues that were being probed that I was not able to offer advice on, I recommended speaking to either another member of the volunteer group or a counsellor (depending on what was appropriate). It was these questions that led me to reflect more strongly on my own ethical position in relation to the project as a whole and the field work in particular.

3.4.3 The challenge of personal ethics, experience and performance

Due to the often intense and concentrated research periods involved in the research, it was common that I was asked my opinion on certain matters by the participants. It helped that I shared much of the environmental ethic of many of the volunteers. I did not need to perform in a setting that I did not care about, or move my behaviour too far from my own principles. The volunteer work and the strong beliefs of individuals inevitably led to strong debate and moments of both agreement and polar disagreement. It was therefore necessary at times to be diplomatic in giving opinions and contributing to these discussions. This 'performance' of doing research (Pratt, 2000; Latham, 2003) was one that had to be constantly negotiated and amended to differing situations.

Before conducting the PhD research I did have personal experience of volunteering and also a limited knowledge of many of the volunteering locations and landscapes. My volunteering had been in zoos, stables and kennels, working with and caring for animals. My motivations to do so were twofold. Firstly, I had always been surrounded by animals and had pets as a child. As well having a whole range of mammals, reptiles, fish and insects throughout my childhood I also used to stay and help on a croft over summers in the Highlands. At the time, I had passing aspirations to pursue a career either as a veterinarian or a farrier. As a child and into my mid to late teenage years I also went on caravanning holidays across Scotland where I accumulated knowledge on different Scottish areas and understood issues around forestry management in these areas. This volunteering gave me some previous insight into volunteer groups with a related, but not direct, environmental concern and provided me with a basis of knowledge. However, I still had, as a volunteer, to learn all the techniques associated with volunteer tasks such as planting methods, lifting and handling skills, tree/plant/animal identification as well as associated knowledge on local laws. Throughout the empirical research year, I therefore

went from being a relative novice to being moderately knowledgeable. This presented some challenges.

This accumulation of knowledge did a number of things. On a positive note it did give me the freedom to be more in tune with other volunteers and better at observing my surroundings, rather than having to be fully focussed on the task that I was doing. Secondly, my own embodiment in the task and starting as a novice provided me with the experience of what others at that stage may be encountering. Thirdly, among the experienced volunteers in the groups, it helped develop trust and acceptance. I found that I could relate on a more equal basis with these volunteers without being viewed as the inexperienced student. However, in some situations this inexperienced persona would be useful. With other inexperienced volunteers, I would find that they would share feelings more readily when they could view me as being in a similar situation.

'Peter came over to share his excitement at finding a good spot to plant some of our Scots pine trees. We had been chatting earlier about taking longer than some of the others to find good mineral rich areas to put them. We both went over and put a good few in that area while taking the time to chat about our tree planting experiences so far.'

(SFRP field diary)

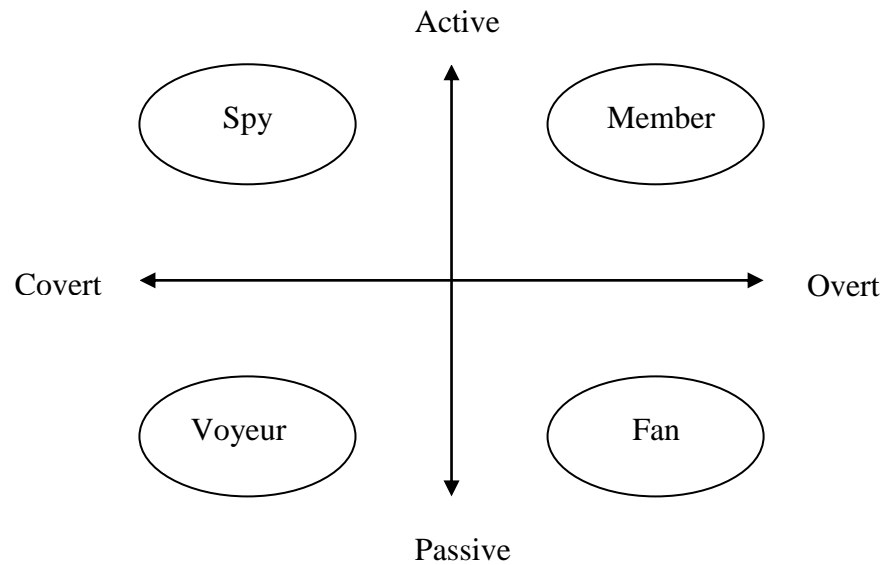
The above excerpt came from my first SFRP work-week, Peter was also a first time volunteer. This was our first day of tree planting and we had been sharing our anxieties and discoveries about the task. As I became more experienced, as well as being viewed as the researcher, I found myself, especially with new volunteers, in a position of unintentional authority. Often the volunteers would ask me questions about procedure, technique in a particular task or more widely varying questions on Scottish landscape and history. This was because of my position of researcher, experienced volunteer and also being Scottish among an often largely non-Scottish group (in the case of SFRP).

'At the start of the day Alan was showing the group how to fell a tree. As he was doing this I instinctively moved over to where I knew the tree was not going to fall. Alan then asked the group where they thought the tree would fall, taking into account the position of the cut wedge, the weight distribution of the tree, the slope and the wind speed/direction. This resulted in Graham joining me and saying that because I had done this before he would stick to where I was.'

(SFRP field diary)

In this example, I was on my third SFRP work-week. Graham knew that I had been on previous work-weeks and therefore viewed me as being in a position of experience and knowledge. I would sometimes downplay this role for two reasons. The first was so as to not interfere with the authority of the group leaders and I would often refer volunteer questions to them or ask them for reinforcement. The second was to maintain a persona on a similar knowledge level as the volunteers so I would adjust my behaviour accordingly. I was constantly adapting to not only working with new groups, but also new members within the case study groups.

As discussed earlier, I set myself up as being open with the volunteers about my presence and the aims of the research, obtaining both organisational and individual consent wherever possible. As briefly discussed earlier, there was a slight blurring between the relative overt-ness and covert-ness to the research. The diagram below illustrates two dimensions of the researcher's role:

Figure 3.3: Field roles in observational fieldwork.

Source: Adapted from Van Maanen (1978: 344).

These dimensions draw on the strength of active participation in the research and the extent to which those researched are aware of being studied. If only using this diagram, I would place myself relatively solidly within the realm of a member, being overt with my participation and research aims and being an active volunteer within the groups. There are, however, some covert strategies of completing field notes in private and observing volunteers without them always being aware of my gaze. I therefore passed through moments of crossing into the realms of spy or voyeur. Consequently, there were constant negotiations across these roles, representing different points with both the case-study groups, and also with different volunteers within the groups. In addition to this complication, Van Maanen's categories were specifically developed within an urban policing ethnography in 1970s America, a context which is far removed from that of this thesis. My own observational work was more fluid and personal in its approach, volunteering with individuals and sharing experiences with them in both public and private spaces. I certainly do not go into areas of 'deception' that Van Maanen discusses to infiltrate groups, even if there were moments of 'spying' during certain tasks.

'I was very aware when I first met the group at the train station that they had no idea that I was there to do research. I was going to officially introduce myself and the project later on in the day but I was already caught up in 'arrival' conversations, going through meet and greet questions of who you are and where you come from. I could not go into the full detail of why I was there for the work-week but I did say I was a researcher with an interest in environmental volunteering and this was part of my study. This was only to a few people, from the ten that were there as well. For the first few hours of the day I was in limbo between being completely open about the research and being covert, some volunteers who spoke to me knew and others thought I was solely there as a volunteer.'

(SFRP field diary)

This account illustrates how the boundaries of the Van Maanen model can be very hard to define. I was meeting a residential work-week group at the train station, whose leaders knew I was coming but the individual volunteers who have signed up did not. I therefore went through a period where I was interacting with different participants who had different levels of knowledge and information about me and my project. This situation was also replicated when I went on task days and there was a mix of volunteers that I had worked with before and new volunteers to either me or to the group. My position was therefore constantly in flux and being defined by the situation of the group and the individuals within it. There were also moments within the contacts with the group where I was a 'fan' of the ethos of the group and the work that was being carried out. This was usually due to my own views on environmental conservation or regeneration. I tackled becoming overly involved in this way by attempting to be objective to the arguments behind the work, but also being sympathetic and sensitive to the cause and the value that participants placed upon the activities. I therefore tried to build on and reveal the emotions and attachments of others, and not my own. The field diary entry, above, begins to unpack the arrival experience that I encountered with an SFRP group. Before this could happen, however, contact had to be made with the group themselves.

3.4.4 Making first contact and embodying environmental ethics in research practice

The initial group contact was made through the group gatekeeper. Gatekeepers can be described as ‘those individuals in the organisation that have the power to grant or withhold access to people or situations for the purposes of research’ (Burgess, 1995: 48). Therefore, when trying to initially gain access to a group the gatekeeper wields a great amount of power, primarily to either grant or deny access. They can then become the ‘inroad’ into the group, one that can instigate introductions and initial meetings with others in the group.

This gatekeeper access, as with so many other aspects of the individual case study work, was unique to each group. The initial access to the groups was managed through the contact details obtained through the database search. Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP), Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV) and Community Environment Group (CEG) were contacted in this way. Once the questionnaire responses were received and analysed these groups were identified as being able to fit the typological make-up to be used as case studies. Through a combination of e-mail, phone calls and face-to-face meetings I discussed with these individuals whether it would be appropriate and possible for me to work with their group. It was after this stage that consent was obtained to work with the group (the Informed Consent Form and Organisational Information Sheet are Appendices 6 and 7).

The SFRP gatekeeper was the overall work-week coordinator but he was not present on any of the work-weeks. In this role he was a full-time paid employee of SFRP. He split his time between working in his office and going out to visit volunteer groups. His role as gatekeeper was solidified by the authority gained from this position and his ability to block entry. On my first work-week the two SFRP facilitators were aware that I would be there but had very little idea of what my research would involve. In addition to this, the

gatekeeper informed me that it would be extremely difficult to obtain volunteer consent when individuals signed up for a work-week. Therefore, consent had to be obtained from individuals on each week. In practice, this involved me having to reintroduce myself to different volunteers on each work-week. This was often carried out on the afternoon or evening of the first day. This will be described further in Chapter 6. Before interviews, participants were presented with an Individual Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 8) and asked to fill in the Informed Consent Form.

In the cases of CEG and FSP I was able to attend committee meetings to introduce myself and the project before attending any task days. In these cases the majority of committee members also attended the task days so it was more straightforward to obtain initial consent with the full group. Again, and as with all the groups, individual consent was obtained before interviews and focus group work. In the case of EEV I met the chairperson and secretary to discuss the research a month before going on the first Sunday task day. The secretary had been my initial contact but she then had to gain permission from the chairperson for the group participating in the research. This gave them the opportunity to raise my attendance at the next group meeting and gain the oral consent of the other members. On the initial task day, I introduced myself to the group. It was particularly important to build a healthy relationship in this group as they had a negative experience with a researcher in the past that had deliberately caused friction between members of the group as part of a group dynamic and psychology project. It therefore took me longer than some of the other groups to feel more integrated within EEV. This highlighted the possibility of both volunteers and organisations being wary, or even resistant, to opening their group up to an academic researcher.

I had already interviewed the Natural Space Action (NSA) founder when he had volunteered with SFRP and he subsequently invited me to attend the task days of that

group. Informed consent was obtained from interviewees and a number of the volunteers were aware that I was conducting research on environmental volunteering but taking into account the fluid nature of these tasks days, individual consent from each person that turned up was deemed unnecessary.

Indeed to illustrate the power of the gatekeeper, if I had been denied access to any of these groups by the initial contact then I would have been forced to seek other case studies. The nature of each of the gatekeepers is one of group centrality. They either chair the group or are integral to the running of the tasks, often strongly influencing the direction of the group, both in practical and ethical terms. My own research legitimacy was reinforced, or given authority, by their approval.

'I was half an hour late for my first meeting with the group. I had got lost in the pitch dark park at 8pm while there was about eight inches of snow on the ground. I arrived in the portacabin where the meeting was taking place pretty damp and cold. However, Barbara, welcomed me in when I arrived and later in the meeting asked me to introduce myself to the group and explain what the PhD was trying to answer and what work I would like to do with their group.'

(FSP committee meeting notes)

Barbara was the FSP chairperson and gatekeeper and it was her that I first e-mailed and spoke to about working with the group. Without her invitation and also her having introduced me to the group, the following fieldwork would have been impossible. Barbara gains much of her authority and standing in the group through, not only her official title as chairperson, but her strong involvement in all aspects of the group. This involvement takes the form of organising the committee meetings, funding applications and task days. In addition to this, through the ethnographic research process, it became apparent that she was a well known member in the local neighbourhood who had been involved in other groups

and initiatives. With all the gatekeepers, their authority came through the position that they held in the group, be it as chairperson, founder or paid employee. This position, however, was always reinforced through other means, through being active and respected within the group. My first contact with this gatekeeper was therefore just as important as my subsequent behaviour when I was out volunteering with the group.

The process of adjusting my behaviour and, to some extent, my appearance was one that I learned through the experience of working with each of the groups. On the first work-week with SFRP all the volunteers, including myself, were getting ready in the morning. I sprayed deodorant and was quickly met with a chorus of complaints in the room. These were due to the fact that it was viewed as unnecessary, both for the smell produced and also the packaging that is necessary for such aerosols. This resonates with the work of Kearns (1987) and Parr (1998) who both speak of having to adjust to the groups they are researching. This was both in terms of the way they dressed but also, in Parr's case, the way she smelled. Kearns wore older clothes while researching at a drop-in centre and Parr became aware that her perfumed deodorant could inhibit interaction with the individuals with mental illness that she was attempting to hold conversations with. This reinforces the idea of 'researchers taking more than our intentions and notebooks into any situation; we take our bodies also.' (Kearns, 2005). Fuller (1999) tackles the perceived problem of an academic researcher 'going native' when immersed in a group and their beliefs by the apparent 'loss of validity, integrity, criticality, necessary distance, formality and, ultimately, reputation.' (Fuller, 1999: 226). However, he argues that this can be partly managed by not going completely 'academic' either. He argues that 'there is a space in which constant reassessment, renegotiation and repositioning of a researcher's various identities allows the development of a collaborative position' (ibid: 226). This is a collaborative position that is adopted in many other social situations. In this setting it is

collaboration between the roles of academic researcher and environmental volunteer, and all the personal ethics that flow through these roles.

The sensitivity to deodorant usage may not be said for all the individuals within SFRP but there were a higher number here that were particularly attuned to global environmental issues, both as a background and as a result of the residential setting of the work. This could be said of the volunteers across all the groups and this was reflected in the general discussions and conversations that took place within individuals in meetings and on task days. I like to consider myself as being ecologically conscious and considerate but I had to be more attuned to details such as discussions on particular product brands or supermarket chains and how good or bad they were on considering environmental issues.

There was also an ethic among the groups, especially Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV), Friends of Southside Park (FSP) and SFRP, that there was something to be admired in working hard and getting dirty. I would make a point of helping with the unappealing tasks such as tool cleaning or carrying, making myself as much the participant as possible. I would also make sure that my note taking was not overly obtrusive or apparent. I would often make short notes during a task day or mention short phrases or quotes into the dictaphone but I made sure that this did not interfere with working as 'just another volunteer' in the group. Before work-weeks with SFRP and the residential weekend with EEV, I deliberately would not shave and after that first work-week experience all hair and body products (apart from toothpaste and soap) were left behind. I was not being false with my appearance or behaviour but I was adjusting to fit in with the other volunteers. This was to help the journey from making initial contact with the group, to being a newcomer, to then being an accepted member of the group.

Janes' (1961) outlined five stages from newcomer, through provisional member, categorical member, personalised member with full rapport and imminent migrant. The newcomer stage is the initial ethnographic work with each group and lasts a short time. After this, the provisional member stage is when the researcher is being tested by the community (participants). The categorical member stage is when the research and researcher are seen as legitimate by the community and the personalised member stage is when the researcher has the full trust and confidence of the community. The richness of information collected from the groups rose with a higher acceptance, up until the imminent migrant stage where volunteers would begin to ask questions about research findings and future directions for me after the project. This was by no means wholly clear within the case study groups, as I was constantly meeting new members and groups within the organisations that I had already been working with. The pathway through Janes' stages was therefore not only linear in one direction, but I could revert to an earlier stage within the same group, particularly when working with new volunteers. My acceptance was therefore often more strongly based around individuals as opposed to the full case study group. The adjustment of my behaviour and appearance helped me develop relationships with the participants but it also helped that I share many of the environmental views that many of the volunteers expressed. It was this combination of behavioural adjustment and personal viewpoints that I had to balance to aid me in integrating with the case study groups. I also had to integrate my funding bodies that had a vested interest in the research, as well as adjusting how I presented this to the participants. This was another way of considering my own positionality within the research but also how the participants may interpret me as a researcher, as is discussed below.

3.4.5 The ESRC-CASE funded studentship

The PhD studentship itself was a three year jointly funded project by the ESRC and the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS). The proposal by the Geography Department at the University of Dundee submitted the successful application to host the PhD student. Therefore, by the time I was successfully interviewed for the studentship the broad research questions and methodology were in place. This, as has been shown above, has been morphed considerably along the way but with the same broad aims. When considering case study groups there was also an aspect of including those that had a ‘tree’ involvement (in order to satisfy the specific interests of FCS) as well as just a green or natural space involvement, hence including woodland interaction in the case study group continuum and typology. Although not being in any way detrimental to the research, and often providing an air of authority, the FCS relationship did provide some challenges. The Information Sheets provided participants with the names of the ESRC and FCS as funders. This would often provide an impression of legitimacy and participants would sometimes ask what the FCS involvement was. I had to make it clear that my research findings would not be swayed by the influence of FCS (and reiterate the two stage process of anonymisation) but I also had to admit that the initial direction of the project was partly shaped by an FCS agenda, as discussed in Chapter 1. This involvement would, on occasion, make participants suspicious, as a number of the groups and individuals had had both positive and negative dealings with FCS in the past.

When submitting reports to the FCS on progress and findings, in both written and oral form, aspects of the research that were particularly relevant were often highlighted. This does not change the outcomes but focuses the research onto the questions that FCS is looking to have answered. This ensured a stronger concentration on FCS policy relevance and also helped me understand practitioner relevance. This means being aware of how to

focus the research findings in a way that was relevant to practitioners within FCS but also those in the case study groups. This has included questions over motivations to volunteer, barriers to volunteering and evidence on the beneficial aspects of environmental volunteering (especially that in woodlands and forests). For example, during an FCS presentation one of the researchers in the audience found the theme and discussion around embodiment particularly interesting, and related this to the experiences of a new FCS volunteer cycle group he was involved with setting up. Indeed, this managing of the relationship can be viewed as one that makes sure that the research products can be understood and appreciated in both the FCS context but also in considering feedback to participants.

3.5 Methodology conclusion

The research design was one that has travelled from database construction, through questionnaire distribution to case study selection. From this case study selection an ethnographic approach was employed with five different environmental volunteering groups in Scotland, encompassing complementary strategies of semi-structured interviewing, focus group work and participant observation that included committee meeting attendance and participant photography, as well as a host of other related group activities. This overall approach was initially developed to answer the research questions listed at the start of this chapter and was constantly been adapted and adjusted as necessary to deal with the challenges of working with such a diverse range of groups and individuals. This chapter has started to illustrate the challenges, and also the opportunities, of working with these groups. Although all of the case studies were environmental volunteering groups and have shared interests, they each also had a unique character that was reflected in the individuals that volunteered with them.

The case study groups' work rhythms were both temporally and geographically sporadic in nature so required a longer study with each of the groups, over a greater period of time. The research methodology was designed to address and tackle the particularly embodied and emotional experiences of the environmental volunteering. These experiences are multi-sensory in themselves, both through the conducting of tasks, the being in place and the social interactions that take place. Although providing challenges in terms of personal ethics, performance and behaviour, the participant observation provided a platform to understand individual experiences of their volunteering. This was further enhanced by the participant photography to capture momentary glances of the volunteer experience and the committee meeting notes. This strategy helped to inform and shape the interviews and the focus groups, where a more nuanced personal and group discussion account of the volunteering was gained. This also allowed a clearer sense of the wider social and political relations of individuals, and of the links to social capital and citizenship of the case study groups. It was this combination of methods and approaches that built understanding of the layers of participation and interaction within the volunteer groups. It was specifically active environmental volunteer groups in natural environments that are being studied. Therefore, personal and social relations needed to be understood in terms of actively embodied ethical and emotional practices in the various natural environments where the volunteers worked. It was the encounters at this interface that this methodology aimed to capture. The ethnographic strategy was also designed to give particular insights into well-being, from the embodied and physical interactions with tasks and landscapes, to the social networks and capital impacts that can be associated with group environmental volunteering. The following five chapters explore the empirical findings generated by this challenging but highly productive methodology.

Chapter 4: Setting the Organisational Context of Environmental Volunteering

4.1 Introduction

As the methodology has discussed, the majority of the following empirical chapters will be primarily focusing on individual experiences of environmental volunteering that can be framed through the social interactions, tasks and landscapes of the volunteering. In this chapter, however, the focus begins with the organisational profiles. The chapter discusses the responses received through the postal questionnaire from environmental volunteering organisations and how these have been used to contribute to the following empirical chapters and themes.

In Section 4.2 the organisational perspective given by the questionnaire responses will be used to inform a more detailed overall profile of the environmental volunteering groups that were surveyed. This will look in general terms at the role and the funding of the groups, the structure that the groups take in terms of organisational set up, the physical areas in which the organisations work and the networks and links that they have. These responses will be used to highlight the diversity that exists within the organisations in this volunteering area.

Section 4.3 will also use the questionnaire responses from the organisations to provide a broad set of volunteer profiles across the areas of demographics, motivations, activities and perceived benefits. The responses will give an opportunity to place the context of the questionnaire within two broad volunteering studies in the UK, as well as a study specifically on environmental volunteering, particularly looking at volunteer numbers and

demographics. These will be used to help to understand where these questionnaire responses fit in the broader volunteering context and to begin to differentiate environmental volunteering from other forms of volunteering.

Section 4.4 in the chapter will explore the selected case study groups in more detail, using both survey evidence and literature from the groups themselves. The history and individual character of each of the groups will be discussed, including their aims and vision and their volunteer make-up and membership. This will provide a more nuanced appreciation of the groups and also aid in securing a better sense of the groups for the following chapters.

The organisational responses in themselves are limited in what they can say about the volunteering *experience*. To address the question of individual experience and answer the research questions the understanding of the volunteering must go beyond the categories that can be labelled and answered in the questionnaire. In this sense a more embodied approach is required (Conradson, 2003). This chapter will indicate the direction that the following empirical chapters will take by building on the questionnaire responses, as well as other case study group literature, to illustrate the need to take a more in-depth and embodied view of how individuals interact with their volunteering.

4.2 Organisational profiles

The organisational profiles will build on the survey responses, looking more closely at the overall roles, structure and environmental location in which the organisations operate. As well as this, the networks and linkages that exist between the surveyed organisations and others will be explored.

4.2.1 Role and funding

As with the Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS) survey of 2007, the questionnaire began by asking about the role of the organisation. The VDS survey was commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and based upon 203 volunteer involving natural heritage organisations in Scotland. This initial question, included in Figure 4.1, was designed to establish a link between where the group situated themselves in terms of broad placement and organisational aims and objectives.

Table 4.1: Organisation roles

Role of the organisation	Main role		Additional role	
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)
Direct environmental action	27	56	11	23
Provision of services	15	31	9	19
Community involvement and education	7	15	0	0
Research	3	6	9	19
Health initiatives	2	4	0	0
Campaigning	1	2	13	27
Advocacy	1	2	4	8

Source: Author's survey: 2008 (n = 48)

Table 4.1 outlines the role of the organisation in both the main and additional role categories. The respondent could answer with more than one role. When main or additional categories are used, these are referring to the questions which asked to distinguish between what was a main or an additional role, environment or activity in which the groups worked. The most dominant of these in this case is the role of direct environmental action and the provision of services. Direct environmental action can be understood as action that is taken by the group to further environmental based goals. This

may be in the form of both task related activities but also activities such as lobbying on environmental issues. The provision of services can be viewed as the group supplying their time and labour either in support of, or in place of, public sector services. These two categories represented main roles in 56% and 31% of all organisations respectively. These are both primarily concerned with the practical work of the group, in other words, the doing of the tasks. This is important as this form of volunteer role is hands-on and not solely based on a paid membership or checkbook activism (Putnam, 2000) that was discussed in the literature review. The health initiatives category received only two responses in total. This perhaps suggests that the organisations do not view health impacts as a function of their work and shows the importance of exploring this on an individual level rather than only via organisations. Community involvement and education received seven responses as a main role, but none as an additional role. This suggests that when this community and education purpose is set out, it is implicit in the running and aims of the group and not merely an additional impact of the environmental volunteering groups. Research, campaigning and advocacy were very much seen as additional roles of the groups. To consider the wider impacts of environmental volunteering that go beyond the boundaries that the groups may view their organisation within opens up questions on well-being and social capital that are explored in the subsequent empirical chapters. The VDS Survey (2007) left this question open-ended, making it problematic to directly compare as respondents 'provided answers particular to their organisation' (VDS, 2007: 14). What the VDS survey does highlight here is the broad and diverse range of volunteering organisations that are involved in environmental volunteering, some having a focussed central aim, and others that had a range of aims. This was reflected in this survey by the diversity of the volunteer work but also by the range of funding streams that the organisations accessed.

The question was asked in the survey as to where the sources of funding for the organisation came from. From the responses, 53% of the smallest organisations (with under ten unpaid volunteers) relied solely on fundraising and donations (compared to 21% overall) and a number also obtained payment for volunteer services that supported much of their funding needs (6% overall). However, the majority were receiving some form of outside funding, be it from local authority grants, direct or indirect Scottish or national (Westminster) government funding or from Lottery grants (67% overall). This varied greatly between amounts of under £100, to many thousands over a year or on particular projects. In terms of how these differing forms of funding shaped the case study group dynamics, this will be discussed in the final section of the chapter. The particular behaviours that result from obtaining, retaining and providing feedback and output evidence to the bodies that provide this funding will be explored.

4.2.2 Organisation employees

The survey found that 25% of the groups had paid employees working for the organisation. Of this number, 67% were full-time employees and the rest were part-time employees or were used in a sporadic seasonal or project based capacity. The larger organisations which received greater amounts of funding tended to be those groups that had the need for one or more full-time employee. None of the organisations who responded had any more than ten employees. In a number of cases, however, the organisations used paid employees from partner organisations or funders to support the volunteer work. The group leader may, for example, not be paid by the volunteer organisation but the job that they are carrying out will be part of their job description for another affiliated organisation. This most regularly took the form of a park ranger who would assist and provide guidance on volunteer task days. The volunteer numbers will be discussed in Section 4.3.1.

4.2.3 Environmental volunteering locations

The organisations were asked about the kind of environments in which their volunteering occurred. This was to help ascertain the range of landscapes in which environmental volunteer groups operated and to look at the suitability of the volunteer organisations as case study groups that work in natural environments.

Table 4.2: Environments in which the organisations work

Environment	Both main and additional environments	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Woodland	35	73
Gardens	20	42
Park	17	35
River	15	31
Coastal	12	25
Farm	10	21
Nature reserve	5	10
Urban area	4	8
Other	4	8
Moorland	3	6

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

By studying Table 4.2 it is interesting to note that 73% of the organisations selected woodland areas as an environment in which they work, with the majority of these selections (54%) being as a main environment. As with previous questions, the respondents could provide more than one response. Woodland areas were by far the most dominant of the areas selected and this was followed at some distance by gardens (41%), park (35%) and river areas (31%). Woodland does, however, come with an attached caveat as this wording may retain a number of meanings to those who were responding. For example, this may have been represented by a small number of trees within a more dominantly farm

environment, or it may have been an area of dense forest in which the volunteering occurred. Each of the five case study groups had a least some form of woodland activity, with Scottish Forest Regeneration Project having this as a major role. The simple landscapes of the volunteering, in addition to the motivations to volunteer and the impacts of the different tasks, form another area of the volunteering experience that had to be encountered through using an ethnographic methodology. It is also within this context that more nuanced understandings of terms such as ‘woodland’ can be understood. These landscape descriptions themselves do not contribute to understanding what it is about these spaces that may contain meaning for the volunteers. Emotional attachment and meaning are central to allow an analysis of attachments to place, to different feelings of responsibility or of the interactions with ecological or active citizenship in these areas. It is an understanding of this meaning that will help to unpack the emotional well-being and nature relations that can be felt on both an individual and community level. These relations are discussed in Chapter 9, exploring how the combination of environmental volunteering aspects impacts various forms of well-being.

4.2.4 Networks and linkages

The final section of the questionnaire was included to understand the networks of environmental and volunteering contacts that the groups had. These linkages took on a range of forms including; funding relationships, providing volunteers, knowledge exchange and task site access and support.

Table 4.3: National environmental organisation links

Do you have any links with national environmental organisations?	Number
Scottish Natural Heritage	32
Forestry Commission Scotland	23
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	23
Scottish Wildlife Trust	18
National Trust for Scotland	11
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	11
Greenspace Scotland	9
Plantlife Scotland	5
Other	15

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

The high number of linkages in Table 4.3 highlights the ability and necessity of the groups to work in partnerships with other organisations to achieve their aims. Scottish Natural Heritage provided funding and support information for the largest number of the groups. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers provided volunteers and project support for the majority of the 23 groups who had linkages with them. The Forestry Commission Scotland provided access to land but also funding and knowledge support to the 23 organisations. This suggests that these various connections are needed to allow the groups to function in terms of having sufficient funds, volunteers, land access and information.

Table 4.4: National volunteering organisation links

Do you have any links with national volunteering organisations?	Number
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	23
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	10
Volunteer Development Scotland	7
Other	3
Total	44

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

As Table 4.4 indicates, apart from the link with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, there was a relatively low affiliation with particular national volunteering organisations, indicating the connection to the environmental aspects of the volunteering may be stronger with these groups than those concerned with the wider volunteering picture. This may suggest a stronger attachment of the groups to environmental concerns and agendas, as opposed to those associated with wider voluntary issues. This may partly shape how individuals experience the volunteering within the group.

4.2.5 Diversity of profiles within the survey

The responses from the survey regarding organisational profiles illustrate the diversity that exists within this group of surveyed organisations and the problems associated with viewing environmental volunteering organisations as a homogenous group. The responses helped to paint a picture of environmental volunteering organisations that each viewed themselves in contrasting ways. Within the responses to the overall role and function of the organisation, there were many different responses from the respondents. This accentuates not only the actual diversity of the groups, but also the perceived ideological differences of the groups and of the individuals that were completing the questionnaire. For example, two groups may be performing the same task but may view their reason for doing so in divergent ways. This can be seen in case study profiles in Section 4.4. This also works for individual volunteers and the meaning and reasoning they give to their volunteering may influence the impacts on their well-being. This is reflected in the practicality versus spirituality debate in Chapter 9 that looks at individuals carrying out the same task, but with different motivations and ethics for doing so. To go from an organisational response to an individual understanding is important, but the organisational role and shaping of the volunteer experience must be understood at the same time.

Across the surveyed groups, there was great disparity between where funding came from and also the amounts that were obtained. This could be partly associated with the diversity in the number of volunteers, numbering in some at fewer than ten and in others to well over two hundred. The range of environmental landscapes in which the volunteering took place also varies greatly. Some groups focus very strongly on one area, such as gardens, while others work across a whole range of these landscapes. Even the linkages that the organisations have made with others, in various forms, shows the contrasting ways in which groups interact and operate. It is therefore extremely difficult to construct one 'typical' group, one that could represent all these dimensions and spectra. It is this diversity that will necessarily be explored within the five individual case studies that have tried to capture many of these survey responses, but also to then provide the scope to explore the more embodied and experiential research questions. In the next section the survey responses will look at the profile of the organisations volunteers, comparing these responses and numbers to other environmental volunteering surveys.

4.3 Profiling environmental volunteers

These profiles have again been collated from the survey responses from the organisations. These profiles will deal more explicitly with the organisational responses to the volunteer make-up of their group and the activities that the volunteers are involved in, as well as the motivations and perceived benefits to the volunteers. This will show where the survey compares with or diverges away from other surveys, but also shows gaps in the participation of certain groups within environmental volunteering.

4.3.1 Demographics

As would be expected, there were large differences in the number of volunteers that belonged to each group. The survey covered a wide range of environmental volunteer groups and this was reflected in these figures. Table 4.5 shows the number of part-time unpaid volunteers that were active in the group at the time of questioning:

Table 4.5: The number of part-time unpaid volunteers active at the organisation

Number of unpaid volunteers	Number of groups	Percentage (%)
None at the Moment	5	10
1 - 10	17	35
11 - 20	9	19
21 – 30	6	13
31 – 40	3	6
41 – 50	2	4
50 +	6	13

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

The majority of local neighbourhood resident groups (74%) had between 1-20 active volunteers with many acting as facilitators for other community activities and events. The groups organised by national organisations tended to have larger numbers of volunteers that were not local residents but shared a concern for the natural environment in general. Some groups also pointed out the distinction that must be made between 'members' and 'active volunteers'. This point can be applied to all the groups. Each group had forms of either informal or formal membership. These may be individuals that merely renew a paid membership each year and receive information about the group or they may occasionally attend group meetings or events. This is compared with those who are active members and regularly take part in the group tasks and/or the running of the group. The dynamics of the

groups are very different when considering this split and are discussed within the context of the case study groups in Section 4.4.

The demographic make-up of the individuals that volunteered for each group was also covered in the survey. Tables 4.6 to 4.9 cover questions on gender, ethnicity, employment and age. These will be briefly discussed and related to other studies.

Table 4.6: Gender response

Which of the following accurately describes your volunteers' gender?	Number	Percentage (%)
Equal mix	28	58
Mostly male	8	17
Mostly female	8	17
Male only	1	2
Female only	0	0
Don't know	1	2
Unanswered	2	4

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

Table 4.7: Ethnicity response

Which of the following accurately describes your volunteers' ethnicity?	Number	Percentage (%)
Mostly white	42	88
A roughly equal mix	1	2
Don't know	2	4
Unanswered	3	6

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

Table 4.8: Employment response

Which of the following accurately describes your volunteers' employment?	Number	Percentage (%)
Mostly retired	14	29
A roughly equal mix of all	13	27
Mostly full-time employed	9	19
Mostly unemployed	4	8
Mostly part-time employed	2	4
Don't know	3	6
Not applicable	1	2
Unanswered	2	4

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

Table 4.9: Age response

Which of the following accurately describes your volunteers' age?	Number	Percentage (%)
Mostly 26-34	3	6
Mostly 35-60	19	40
Mostly 61-74	7	15
A roughly equal mix	15	31
Don't know	2	4
Unanswered	2	4

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

In relation to gender, 58% of groups had an equal mix, with 17% being mostly male and 17% being mostly female. This represented an extremely even split across the genders. The vast majority of volunteers across the groups were answered as being 'mostly white' (88%). For employment status the three main responses were 'mostly retired' (29%), 'mostly full-time employed' (19%) and a 'roughly equal mix' (27%). Finally, for age, the highest numbers were between the ages of 35-60 (40%) or a roughly equal mix of ages (31.4%).

These findings for gender and age have similar representations in the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) Analytical Topical Report on volunteering (Scottish Executive, 2008) and Volunteer Development Scotland's (VDS's) Annual Digest of Statistics findings (2006) on volunteering. Both studies also found an equal mix of male and females involved in general volunteering. VDS data shows that the age bands with the highest proportion of volunteers are 35 to 44, 45 to 59 and 60 to 74, similar to both the SHS findings and table 4.9. There is a slight disparity between table 4.8 and the corresponding question in the SHS findings. The SHS shows a higher percentage of part-time workers and unemployed volunteering at 25% and 13% respectively and a lower number of retired (19%). The percentage of those in full-time employment is similar at 20%. This would suggest that there is higher number of retired individuals who are involved in environmental volunteering, compared to general volunteering. This may create questions on why this occurs and raise issues around the tasks that are being carried out and the individual motivations for getting involved with this particular type of volunteering. This may also help inform issues such as time commitment to the volunteering if it is assumed that those that are retired may be able to commit more than those in employment. Although not analysing the volunteer ethnicity directly, the VDS study supports table 4.7 in terms of the ethnicity of volunteer managers, finding that 94% were white.

To compare these statistics to another specifically environmental volunteering study carried out for the Institute of Volunteering Research across 257 environmental volunteers in 66 organisations in the North-East of England, '95% gave their background as white and the remaining five per cent would 'rather not say'' (Ockenden, 2008: 25). This study also corroborated a relatively even gender split and the mean age of a volunteer was given as 59 (ibid: 26). Also, 'the majority of respondents said that they were 'permanently retired' (53%) while 26% said they were in 'full-time employment'' (ibid: 27). These other studies

therefore highlight similarities and slight disparities in the make-up of the volunteers in both a broad volunteering perspective, as well as a more focussed environmental study.

4.3.2 Motivations for volunteers joining the organisation

The following question on motivations helped to understand the role that the organisations viewed themselves as filling in terms of both personal and social well-being for the volunteers involved in their organisation.

Table 4.10: Motivations to volunteer

How important are the following in motivating people to volunteer for your organisation (very important only)?	Both main and additional environments	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Improve local community environment	34	71
Altruism	14	29
Work experience	10	21
Fill in time due to retirement	9	19
Develop their social networks	8	17
Improve their physical health	8	17
Training	8	17
Improve their mental health	6	13
Previous volunteering experience	5	10
Fill in time due to unemployment	4	8
Recommendation of friend/relative	4	8

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

Table 4.10 outlines the motivations that were seen by group organisers who completed the questionnaire as being very important for people to volunteer. Improving the local community environment was selected in the highest number of cases, with altruism and work experience receiving the next highest totals. It is interesting to note that these are themes that fit in closely with the ethos of active communities, perhaps an agenda that the

organisations are still more in tune with. However, it is still to be investigated if these motivations resonate with the individual volunteers. The response also reflects that the majority of the groups consisted of volunteers from the local area. It can be seen that developing social networks, improving mental health and improving physical health scored very similar counts. These appear low when compared with improving the local environment, but are also comparable to many of the other categories. Again, as with the responses in Table 4.1, these motivations are split between environmental and individual motivations. It can be observed here that the environmental motivation of improving the local environment gains the highest response rate. This appears to be the organisational perspective coming through here, linking again to the aims and objectives of the group. It may be that the group representative was tentative in answering on motivations that specifically relate to the impacts on individual volunteers in terms of building social networks and their mental and physical well-being. This may be because the organisations find these criteria harder to observe and measure, while the environmental impacts of the groups in terms of tasks or projects are more quantifiable. To understand these personal interactions with environmental volunteering it is therefore necessary to gain an individual's perspective on their own experiences. This leads on to gaining a perspective on why individuals are taking part in environmental volunteering. These issues of initial and continuing motivations are explored in Chapters 5 and are related to the tasks individuals perform and also the impact that they view their volunteering as having.

4.3.3 Activities undertaken by volunteers

This section will discuss the breadth of activities that the groups are engaged in, which includes active tasks but also community and recreational activities.

Table 4.11: Volunteer activities

What activities do your volunteers partake in?	Main role		Additional role		Total (%)
	Number	Percentage (%)	Number	Percentage (%)	
Litter clearing	16	33	15	31	64
Weeding	15	31	9	19	50
Vegetation planting	14	29	16	33	62
Tree planting	13	27	16	33	60
Path construction	13	27	9	19	46
Surveys of plant or animal populations	9	19	14	29	48
Fence/wall building	9	19	13	27	46
Seed propagation	9	19	8	17	36
Plant clearance	9	19	1	2	21
Community/education events	8	17	1	2	19
Signage erection	7	15	19	40	55
Recreational activities	3	6	0	0	6
Plant identification	1	2	15	31	33
Other	5	10	3	6	19

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

In Table 4.11, the volunteer activities are spread relatively evenly across the whole range of choices depending on the aims of the organisation. There were five main activities that received responses in total of over 50%. These were litter clearing, weeding, vegetation planting, tree planting, path construction and signage erection. Fence/wall building, signage erection and plant identification seem to be predominantly additional tasks. Weeding, path construction, plant clearance and community/education events have

significantly higher numbers when conducted as a main role. What this spread of responses illustrates is the diversity of the tasks undertaken by different organisations. It is difficult to ascertain from these numbers the patterns and work routines of the groups and to understand the different experiences that participating in these activities provides. The thesis goes on to consider not just the task activities but also looks to understand how the locations of these tasks and the way they are conducted as being as important as the tasks themselves. This is why more complex issues of the volunteering tasks and the landscapes that they are conducted in are discussed in Chapter 6. Again, this is moving from what can be acquired through gaining an organisational perspective, to the nuanced and diverse experiences of individual volunteering engagement (while still retaining the organisational context in which the volunteering occurs).

4.3.4 Perceived benefits to the volunteers

The differences in the aims of the group and the aims of the individual must be investigated here. The aims of the organisation can show the direction that the group wants to go, but these may be interpreted differently or contested by the individuals who volunteer. In other words, the ethics and subsequent impacts that are utilised and felt by the volunteer may be different to those outlined by the organisation that they are volunteering for. Those groups with an aim to facilitate community participation will clearly have links to building social networks and trying to encourage local resident involvement. It is more problematic, however, to assess what possible social capital is built by a one-off volunteer attending a tree planting day, for example. Individual perspectives are imperative to understand these issues. This is highlighted when looking at another question that was put to the organisations. The organisations were asked in Question 16 what they thought the benefits to the volunteers were.

Table 4.12: Benefits of volunteering

What do you feel are the main benefits to the volunteers from the environmental volunteering they carry out (very important only)?	Responses	
	Number	Percentage (%)
Sense of achievement	33	69
New social networks	12	25
Improved confidence	10	21
Mental health improvement	9	19
Physical health improvement	8	17
Application of skills to personal life	5	10
Application of skills to work life	5	10
Community benefit/giving something back	5	10
Other	2	4

Source: Author's survey, 2008 (n = 48)

Table 4.12 indicates that it is an overall sense of achievement that is by far the most selected of the perceived benefits. This was a very broad category and may have had secondary effects on the selection of others. In other words, a sense of achievement may have been a result of physical health improvement or giving something back to the community. These impacts appear to have a much closer correlation with well-being and social capital than the responses in Table 4.10. The organisations appear to be recognising the importance of these impacts, but not necessarily accepting them as reasons for volunteers to first get involved in their group. Also, the links between a sense of achievement and broader feelings of well-being and social capital are aspects of environmental volunteering that can only be understood through the individual. These categories do not provide the linkages that are provided by the volunteers themselves, the reasons why they value their environmental volunteering involvement. These include the connections to the tasks and landscapes of the volunteering that were mentioned in the previous section, but also to the importance of social networks and community linkages which are explored in Chapter 7.

From these broad organisational perspectives, the focus will now move to the particular case study groups. The criteria and reasoning behind the selection of these groups has already been justified in Chapter 3. In this section, the aim is to give a more thorough account of the groups while drawing upon their survey responses and their own literature.

4.4 Profile of the five case study groups selected

Each of the case study groups had a very distinct history and character that was framed by organisational issues such how long they had been in existence, why they were created and what were the driving aims and vision behind the groups. They also had differing structures in terms of the make-up of volunteers, the involvement of paid staff and the balance between active and passive members. Firstly the history and character of the groups will be discussed.

4.4.1 History and character

The history of the groups is important to frame the organisational thinking and ethos, as these are solidified in the official aims and vision of the group. This influences not only the direction that the group takes in terms of the volunteering tasks, but also where the volunteering takes place and what individuals join the group. **Scottish Forest Regeneration Project** (SFRP) was set up in the late 1980s with the aim of restoring and regenerating the Caledonian pine forest in the Scottish Highlands. The group's roots lie in the beliefs of their founding member, who is still the figurehead of the group. These roots encompass both a spiritual connection with nature, but also a strong belief in the need for practical action. Figure 4.1 show members of SFRP having a rest during a tree planting

task. The photograph highlights how the group encouraged volunteers to be aware of their surroundings and of the wider role that the group played in re-generating the landscape.

Figure 4.1: SFRP volunteers taking a break from tree planting amongst the heather of a Highland glen.



Source: Author's photograph.

This organisational balance of the spiritual and the practical, which has run through the group since its inception, are issues that have continued through the group. As of 2007, they had managed around 70 work-weeks a year that run from March to November, planting in excess of 800,000 trees. The work-week is a residential week, where up to ten volunteers and two group leaders spend a week living together in the Highlands. They are located near a task location in chalets or lodges and go out on task each morning and return in the evening. As well as working with a range of partners, which will be discussed in Section 4.4.2, SFRP bought their own 4,000 hectare area of land in 2009. By doing this they have a larger amount of freedom to carry out work on the land that fits in with their vision.

Community Environment Group (CEG) was based in a small town community in eastern Scotland and was established in 1999. The group was run by a local management group with the help of paid part-time Project Worker who was a strong driver behind the

group, coordinating many of the activities, securing funding and chairing the committee meetings and AGMs. Figure 4.2 shows a wild flower meadow planted by members of CEG. This was carried out on the outskirts of a residential area and shows one of the many smaller projects that CEG was involved in.

Figure 4.2: A wild flower meadow planted by members of CEG.



Source: Author's photograph.

There was a very strong focus on projects and a diversity of these projects. CEG gave community involvement and education as a main role in response, shown in Table 4.1. This organisational focus on the role of the organisation in the local community opens up the need to study the individual impacts on the participating volunteers.

Friends of Southside Park (FSP) were a local community organisation who worked throughout the year on small projects and continuous maintenance work within an urban park in Glasgow. The main core of the group were also relatively small, with ten committee members who were local residents. The group started in 2006 as a hybrid of local resident action and city council encouragement and involvement. A group of local residents decided to clean up a section of river that runs through the park and while out on

the task the local city council ranger asked them if they would be interested in forming a ‘friends of’ group.

‘The initial idea was for members of the local community to liaise with the local council who own the park, to provide details and ideas of works required and facilities requested by the local area’

(FSP website)³

Since this ‘initial idea’ the group have become more practical in their involvement by running task days and going beyond this original idea of solely liaising with the local council. Central to this, as shown in Figure 4.3, is the annual fun day that is organised by FSP with support and funding from the local council and other organisations.

Figure 4.3: The annual family fun day in Southside Park.



Source: Author’s photograph.

The role of the organisation has therefore morphed over time as the group have branched out on the ideas that they develop and have the ability to carry forward. Again, this has been done partly through the funding that they have obtained and is outlined in Section

³ The use of case study group web pages have also been anonymised and will subsequently only be referred to as the appropriate group website.

4.4.2. The next group was much more driven by previous volunteer involvement and an attachment to a specific piece of land and how it is used.

Natural Space Action (NSA) was a group based in a Scottish city that was formed in 2008 by an individual who had returned from a SFRP work-week. The individual wanted to continue environmental work in his home area so he set up this group to reclaim an area of derelict green space surrounded by tenement buildings near his home. The space had previously been used until the 1970s as ash football pitches and tennis courts, but since then the area had become overgrown. The long-term vision was to turn the space into a multi-use community garden and green space by the introduction of raised vegetable beds, bat boxes and green recreation areas. This is shown in Figure 4.4, and displays some of the vegetable beds that NSA members would like to see become a long-term and permanent feature of this space.

Figure 4.4: Community raised allotments constructed and planted by NSA members.



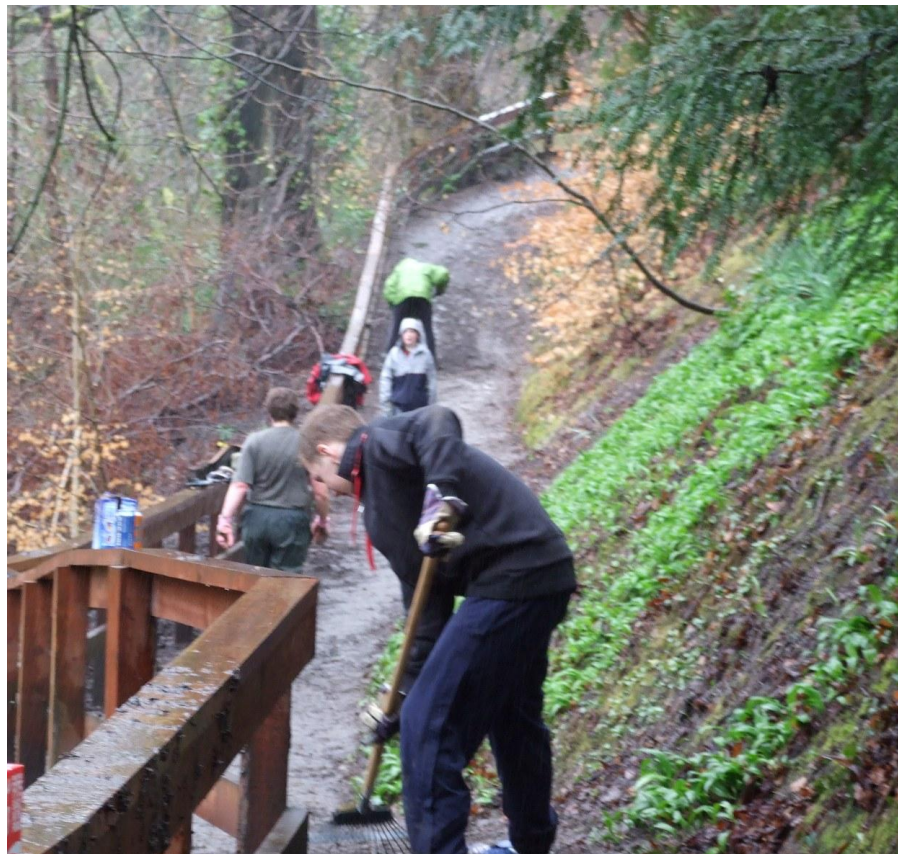
Source: Author's photograph.

The group had, in a relatively short period of time, taken on a necessarily politicised role as well, as the land they were working on is owned by the council. This had resulted in various legal actions and threats and a court appearance by the chairperson and treasurer. The council had asked the group to leave the land as they had sold it to property developers

to build flats. There was then an agreement made between NSA and the land developer that volunteers could use the land until construction work started. This dispute largely shaped the group focus and direction and the vision of group.

Finally, **Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV)** was formed in the early-1990s as an environmental charity that carries out practical nature conservation. There was a still a committee of ten individuals who carry out various roles from chairperson to tools manager within the group. EEV worked in partnership with a large number of organisations and private land owners to carry out their tasks.

Figure 4.5: EEV volunteers clearing pathways before digging areas for drainage.



Source: Author's photograph.

The Eastern Environmental Volunteers website stated that they ‘carry out practical nature conservation... for the benefit of wildlife, people and the environment’ (EEV website). This is shown in Figure 4.5, with volunteers working together to make a path more

accessible to walk on and also to reduce erosion by improving the drainage. EEV also stated that ‘We are not political, and we are not involved in campaigning for environmental causes’ (EEV website). They were therefore affirming their main aim and rejecting a campaigning or politicised role that could then influence this. EEV, as well as the other case study groups, were registered charitable organisations and this influenced the avoidance of political involvement of many of the groups.

Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP) also echoed a practical focus in their vision: ‘Our vision is to restore a wild forest, which is there for its own sake, as a home for wildlife and to fulfil the ecological functions necessary for the wellbeing of the land itself’ (SFRP website). The focus here was primarily on the restoration of the forest and not the impacts of the vision on people. This is juxtaposed with how their work-weeks are then marketed to potential volunteers on the website, heralding the benefits of helping the planet, contact with nature, sharing with others and education:

‘Spending a week working amidst the forests, rivers and mountains of the Scottish Highlands provides an opportunity to observe and learn from the land itself, something that often touches people profoundly.’

(SFRP website)

These impacts may be felt in various ways by the volunteers, but this may not be directly stated by the group in their aims for the organisation and the outcomes it seeks to influence. Again, the wider context of the volunteering has to be considered, beyond that of just the practical tasks, to that of social networks and community involvement.

Community Environment Group was one of the groups which listed community involvement and education as one of their main roles in the survey. Their aims were; to improve the environment, to provide environmental information and to involve schools,

community groups and youth groups in projects which will enhance the local community (CEG website). Natural Space Action, although not formed when the questionnaire was distributed, also put community at the centre of their aims by wanting to turn a disused green space 'into a multi-use community green space for the people' (NSA website). Finally, Friends of Southside Park state their constitution as follows:

'The object of this association shall be the advancement of activities for the public benefit by supporting Southside Park,

- 1. To protect the environmental amenity of the park and its precincts*
- 2. To promote environmental education*
- 3. To promote events and recreation within the park.'*

(FSP website)

Again, the FSP constitution is attempting to find a balance between the environmental work and the involvement of people. Indeed, each of the organisations can be viewed as having both environmental and human impacts, be it on a community or on individual volunteers. These interactions will be explored through the ethnographic research to observe how these themes are perceived by the individual volunteers and where they place their priorities and motivations. These can be understood through organisational and individual environmental ethics which are discussed in Chapter 7. This explores the balance that has to be found between how an individual views the aims of their own volunteering and how they integrate these within the aims and objectives of the organisation. Individual interpretations of the organisational aims will also be explored. These multiple voices are presented as one for organisational purposes, but the diversity of individual viewpoints has to be understood. This gives space to explore how this contributes to not only the running of the group, but also the activities that the group is involved in. This, in turn, raises the question of how this may influence the volunteers that are recruited to the organisation and those that stay on and become regular volunteers.

4.4.2 Group funding and partner relationships

This section considers the case study group and the way in which they are funded and how this provides justification for their volunteering and influences the way in which it takes place. SFRP had a number of funders and partners, including Scottish Natural Heritage, the Forestry Commission Scotland and the Royal Society of the Protection of Birds. These were formally funded links as well as partners on particular projects that could assist in facilitating access to land or equipment. The majority of the group's funding, however, came from volunteer payments to attend work-weeks and other donations and memberships. An unsubsidised place on a week cost SFRP £300 and the volunteer was asked to pay a minimum of £63 towards this. The wording that accompanies this in the form is as follows:

'It costs SFRP over £3,000 to run each week. We have a sliding scale fee structure in place in order to make these weeks available to everyone. If you're able to pay more than the specified amount we'd be very grateful. There's also the option to pay the full cost of your work week, which is £300'

(SFRP work-week booking form)

SFRP therefore frame this payment as providing 'transport to and from the meeting location at the start and end of the week; we also provide accommodation and food for vegetarian or vegan meals only' (SFRP website). In this way, it is not the volunteer work that the volunteer is paying for according to SFRP, but rather the transport, food and accommodation that is required to facilitate the actual volunteer work. During these work-weeks, the group leaders and volunteers would work in conjunction with the Forestry Commission to complete certain tasks. This type of partnership was used not only to facilitate the volunteering but also to give it legitimacy. This is legitimacy specifically in the eyes of volunteers/potential volunteers. One of the points used to promote the work-

weeks was that there would be ‘brief meetings with local rangers or land managers’ (SFRP website). These would be the Forestry Commission rangers or other land manager partners and the SFRP described this as working in ‘effective partnerships with organisations such as the RSPB and Forestry Commission Scotland’ (SFRP website). These relationships had been developed over a number of years between SFRP and their partners. This gave the work that was carried out a practical legitimacy by having these high profile and powerful partnerships and backing.

Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV) also worked for a range of clients, which included conservation charities, local councils and other managers of land with conservation value. In total, they had worked on 27 different sites, for sixteen different land owners since their inception in the early 1990s. The land owners were charged a small fee of £5 per volunteer, per day for EEV to do the work on their land as well as paying travel expenses. They received small grants from both Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Wildlife Trust. This was also assisted by a minimal yearly membership fee. These associations made the groups accountable for their funding in the sense that they had to submit reports to their funders and also provide a quality of work that legitimised this money. This accountability was not always as clear as the funding may state, however. Groups could find ways to creatively use the money that would broadly cover the funder’s stipulations but also fit in with the group’s current projects or tasks. EEV also produced a monthly newsletter for members, including short articles on the work that was being done and providing the upcoming programme of work so that volunteers could choose what days they would like to attend. This reflected the organisational experience of EEV that had been cultivated through their time in existence.

Community Environment Group (CEG) was predominantly funded by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the local council. CEG helped to carry out a number of projects within

the local community to achieve its aims. There was a strong focus on outputs, as outlined in Chapter 3, and holding community events. These were produced to show the environmental work that was carried out by the group. For example, in the past few years this had included planting an orchard, planting wild flower meadows, building a sand martin nesting bank and erecting signage and constructing pathways in a number of local green spaces. This focus on output was partly as a result of having to provide evidence to funders of success and progress. The freedom of the group to operate was restricted by the guidelines that they had to adhere to in order to receive the funding but within these boundaries the money was often used ‘imaginatively’ (as the Project Worker put it.) Again, legitimacy was gained through association and repeated funding granted by SNH but this then raised issues on how the money would be used. This would mean the group would still try and maintain a certain level of autonomy from the rules and regulations set down by their funding bodies. This desire for autonomy and the value put on it by the volunteers will be explored in the following chapters.

Natural Space Action (NSA) are very different in the way that they are run. There is a dual focus on developing the land for community use as a green space, but there is also a very strong element of lobbying and public awareness. They have no official streams of funding, but instead rely on volunteer skills and donations from other organisations. This has resulted in them being able to acquire wood, soil and bat boxes for the space that have all been obtained free of charge. The website of the group, e-mail sending and management, and social networking connections are managed on a voluntary basis by a couple of the volunteers. The project would be considered a success if the volunteers can stop the council selling the land for the development of flats. Instead, they want to continue the area being used as a community green space. This thesis looks at the process and development of this aim, and instead of solely looking at the final outcome, looks at the

individual and community outcomes that develop along the way. Other groups would have a wider range of aims and objectives that necessitated large amounts of funding.

Fundraising for larger projects was one of the main tasks for Friends of Southside Park (FSP). This involved submitting applications to various bodies for money that would go towards projects, including landscaping, picnic bench provision and path building to improve access to areas in the park. The group would also help coordinate and organise the annual summer fun day, as well as a number of other events in the park such as bat walks and dog walking groups. This involved a high level of cooperation with the council, often with council members attending the group committee meetings that occurred on a monthly basis. Again, this may have restricted what the group could do in terms of staying within the guidelines of these organisations or funding bodies, but at the same time the involvement with these partners gave the group the ability to exert more influence in the park, while taking on more responsibility.

It is therefore evident that a large number of differing relationships were important to each of the groups, ones of funding, partnership and cooperation. These have developed to fulfil the group aims and vision, enabling them to carry out their tasks. Although this may be restrictive in some capacity (within the guidelines agreed with the partner or funder) they are also used as tools of justification and legitimacy that can also help in recruiting volunteers. These relationships will be explored in the following chapters to help understand both the benefits of the volunteering to individuals but also to understand the tensions and frustrations that are encountered. These relationships between the funding/partner organisations and the group are also reflected in relationships between the groups and the individual volunteers. The following chapters will focus on the relationship that individuals have with their volunteer work and the many forms that this can take. The

size and structure of the groups can also provide insight into how the groups are run and on what scale they operate.

4.4.3 The structure and volunteer composition of the case study groups

This section will look at how the case study groups are set-up in terms of their volunteer numbers, memberships and also if the organisation involves paid staff. In the case of SFRP, they retained around eight employees when the research was begun. These were full-time members of paid staff who were based in their small offices. These included administrators who organised the work-weeks, handled the web-site and SFRP magazine publication, as well as handling enquiries and media contacts. There were also more practically based employees who made the weeks run smoothly with accommodation, tools and locations. On a second level, SFRP retained around forty individuals who could be group leaders for specific work-weeks. They could do this on only one occasion a year, or they could return every second week (if there was demand) during the volunteering months which went from March to November. This was most often past volunteers who, after a training week, could co-lead a week with another group leader. For this, they were paid £300 and provided with the same food and accommodation as the volunteers. Considering the number of work-weeks that had to be co-ordinated and the number of volunteers that this involved, there was a necessity for the organisation to be more developed in terms of process.

This was also reflected in the health and safety procedures of SFRP. This required group leaders to go through an overall health and safety briefing with the volunteers at the start of their week and also before the start of each task day. Volunteers were taught about the equipment that they would use, the correct way to use it and also about the potential hazards of the task and/or terrain. This very professionalised and business-like approach

was one that was necessary but also met resistance among some employees, group leaders and volunteers. These tensions are discussed in Chapter 8.

Considering that there were 70 work-weeks a year (often running parallel with each other), with up to ten volunteers on each work week, the number of volunteers was extremely high and gives an idea of the organisation and planning required to successfully run the group. In reality, due to weeks that were not full this number would be considerably lower. From conducting the research and from (albeit incomplete) information from SFRP the number of return volunteers was high. The majority of volunteers on the work-weeks were return volunteers (~60%) along with a slightly smaller number of first time volunteers. The gender mix was usually relatively even, with a large spread of ages between 30-65 years old. Due to the physical ability that was needed, there were fewer volunteers over 65. The vast majority were white, travelling from areas across the UK, and some from abroad. These numbers broadly fit in with the results from the survey and the other surveys that were studied on the nature and characteristics of environmental volunteers.

The only other group that had a paid employee was CEG which, as mentioned previously, retained a part-time project worker. This project worker was very much the driver behind the momentum of the group, managing the various projects and using her experience with a large environmental organisation to secure funding for the group. The project worker, with the support of the ten person committee, formed the backbone of EEV and the decision-making that was made at the groups monthly committee meetings. In regards to the demographics of EEV, which also includes FSP and CEG, the representations given are those of the committee members who were also the core of the active return volunteers. The numbers are from contact with the members through the participant observation and interviews, although in all cases the ages are estimated. The committee group consisted of four male and six female members. They were all white, local residents from the

community area between the ages of 40 and 65. Most had moved to the area some time ago from other parts of Scotland and England and some had been born in the surrounding area. Two members were retired and the rest were in full-time employment.

Friends of Southside Park (FSP) and Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV) also had ten-person committees that met on a monthly basis. FSP's committee consisted of six male and four female members between the (again estimated) ages of 40-65. They again, were white local residents from the area surrounding the park. The majority had been born in the city and were in full-time employment, with only two being retired at the time of the research. EEV had a slightly younger committee, over a wider age range from 25-75. The gender split was even, with five male and five female members. There was one semi-retired member, one student and the rest were in full-time employment.

Within both groups these committee members also formed the core of the individuals that would volunteer on active task days. However, EEV had developed a much more structured process. Roles within the committee were much more defined, their website was more elaborate and contained a higher level of information and they were much more structured in terms of volunteers signing up for certain dates and tasks. FSP, instead of having volunteers sign up to a task day, openly advertised the day through notice boards in the park, their website and their e-mailing list. Throughout the year of the research, it became apparent that FSP were becoming more structured in terms of tasks that the committee members carried out and the types and breadth of funding applications that they were submitting. This was partly due to the group learning from past experiences (after being formed in 2006) and also becoming more ambitious and knowledgeable about what they could achieve in the park. This is reflected in the role that the committee played and also in the development of how the group exerted their influence. This moved over time

from only tasks and fun day organising to much larger funded projects that involved other organisations.

Natural Space Action (NSA) had a very different structure again. There was a chairperson and treasurer who organised the group activities. The chairperson initially posted flyers and posters around the area to bring attention to the newly formed group that had been formed to clean-up and use the small area of disused land. The subsequent volunteers were therefore local residents who were interested in making use of this area as a community green space. Along with the practicalities of organising subsequent tasks through similar means, e-mail lists were also used and the use of an informative website and social networking sites contributed to informing those who were interested in the progress the group was making. The chairperson described the management of this process as 'learning as I went – I had no idea how all this... stuff worked.' Due to the disputed nature of the land that the group was working on, the support that they received through the local residents as members of the group or signatures on a petition was almost as important as those volunteers who attended on the task days. Although not recorded by the group, the range of demographics for this group appeared the most diverse of the case study groups. The first clean-up volunteer day and subsequent fun day had representation from families with young children, students, retired individuals and couples across a whole range of age ranges. This is mainly due to the diverse nature of the urban area that surrounds this small green space. There was, however, still no representation from any ethnic minorities on the particular task days that were observed. The support for the group was not only in the form of the active volunteers but also affiliated members and supporters. This difference between active volunteers and group members is one that is useful to explore further.

These encompass two differing forms of volunteering engagement. SFRP, EEV, FSP and CEG all have memberships that can be renewed on a yearly basis. The members pay a

small fee each year, and in return receive newsletters and information on the progress and activities of the group. With NSA, this is more in the form of supporters of the group. This form of membership does not in itself involve any practical volunteering. These members can take a much more passive role, not committing their time, or very little of it, to the work of the group. In contrast to this, the active volunteers are those who engage with the volunteering in a more practical way, often returning to carry out tasks on a regular basis. These individuals commit more to the group in terms of time and embodied tasks and activities. There are also active volunteers who are committee members and who take a stronger role in the running and organisational aspects of the groups. These active volunteers experience the volunteering in a very different way from the passive members. It is these volunteers who, through their task, organisational and social involvement, will be discussed and explored in the following chapters.

4.5 Discussion

The chapter has shown an element of the ‘loose and baggy monster’ (Kendall and Knapp, 1995) that is the overall voluntary sector. Although just looking within organisations in the environmental volunteering sector, the survey illustrated the wide range of elements that make up each of the organisations. Therefore, it is very difficult to define precisely what an environmental volunteering group is. Instead, this sector is made up of a wide range of distinct organisations that operate across a number of different scales. This has been reflected in the choice of the case study groups.

Each of the case study groups has been shown to have a very individual set-up. This is a combination of all the aspects of the groups that have been discussed in the case study group profiling. This reinforces the previous point that from this profiling it is impossible to explain what a ‘typical’ environmental volunteering group would encompass, although

there do seem to be demographic similarities emerging from these groups. These take the form of an even gender split, a mix of (mostly) full-time and retired participants, a core age range between 30-60 and the lack of ethnic minority presence. There are outliers to these but this is where the majority of observable volunteers and committee members were placed.

The range of factors that influence the workings of each group is vast. There is a historical aspect to this in terms of the why and when of the group forming. This influences, and is influenced by, how the group functions in terms of volunteer structure, the involvement of paid workers and the balance of members and active volunteers. As was also shown by the initial organisational and volunteer profile sections, the case study groups understand and carry out their volunteering agenda in differing ways.

What this chapter has aimed to do, through using the organisational responses to the survey and also other group literature, is to show the need to look across a broad range of environmental volunteering groups in a wide range contexts to then make it possible to encompass the breadth of the volunteering experience to the individual. It has also given insight into the direction of where the research must go to explore the themes that appear in the research questions and in the literature review. This, therefore, helps to frame the following chapters around motivations, landscape attachment and nature relations, community and social capital, and well-being. Although still being part of the voluntary sector and part of the shadow state (Wolch, 1990), the volunteer experiences can be very much removed from this way of looking at volunteering. This chapter moves the analysis from the organisational frame to the individual frame. The ethnographic approach is necessary to explore individual perspective through the more embodied experience (Conradson, 2003) of environmental volunteering. In these considerations, however,

organisational ethics and positionality in terms of funding and partners will have to be kept in mind in the forthcoming sections to assist in contextualising the volunteer experiences.

Consequently, Chapter 5 will investigate the initial and continuing motivations of the volunteers. Chapter 6 explores the volunteering experience of environmental volunteers, considering the importance of the tasks and landscapes in which the volunteering takes place. Chapter 7 discusses the wider implications around the themes of community, citizenship and social inclusion and finally, in Chapter 8, the focus will be on the differing forms of well-being explored through the ethnographic research with volunteers.

Chapter 5: Motivations to Participate in Environmental Volunteering

This chapter will discuss the initial and continuing motivations that individuals with the case study groups cited as being central to them beginning and continuing their environmental volunteering. This deals with the vocalised reasons that volunteers give for initiating their involvement with the active environmental volunteering groups and will also discuss the reasons given for returning to volunteer with the groups. A number of the literatures on volunteering will be used to discuss these motivations. It should also be noted that this chapter (and following chapters) draw strongly from interviews, focus groups, personal communication and field diary excerpts. Unless otherwise stated, the quotations are from individual interview responses.

5.1 General motivations to volunteer

Thoits and Hewitt's (2001) five theoretical models of volunteer work are used to discuss the volunteer motivations. These models cover a range of perspectives that link in to issues of personal value, social capital, group belonging and physical and mental well-being. These broad understandings of volunteer motivations were reinforced and built upon by the belief from functional analysis that people volunteer in order to satisfy one or more needs or motives (Finkelstein, 2009). Clary *et al.* (1998) identified six motivational functions: values and desire motives; career motives; understanding/learning motives; social motives; and personal enhancement motives. These broad categories are considered across both the environmental and non-environmental motives discussed by the volunteers. Functional analysis claims that the driver to continue volunteering is primarily guided by what extent the volunteering experience fulfils the relevant initial motives. This however,

seems to ignore the issue of volunteer motivations being influenced by their experiences and how these initial motivations have the possibility of being very different from their motivations to continue volunteering once they have begun with a group.

This leads onto a consideration of specific motivations that drive individuals to work in specifically environmental volunteering. In this chapter initial motivations are discussed in the first sections. This considers environmental and non-environmental reasons that volunteers give for beginning their volunteering. This will be followed by Section 5.5 on continuing motivations that will discuss the similarities and effects of fulfilling initial motivations, but also the importance of developing new and unexpected motivations through this process.

5.2 Motivations involved in environmental volunteering

There are a number of studies within environmental volunteering policy literature that have particularly investigated environmental volunteering motivations. The Dalglish Report (2006) asks what is unique about environmental volunteering in terms of why volunteers become involved. It states that:

‘The motivation of the volunteers is sometimes a wish to contribute to the improvement of the environment, but can also relate to individual development, to health or to social benefits, either to the community or the individual. Like other types of volunteering, it can be a mechanism for acquiring new skills, including social and citizenship skills and can offer a variety of hands on work experience as a stepping stone in a career pathway.’

(Dalglish, 2006: 6)

The quotation above uses the general environment as a base for the motivation to begin but also cites other, non-environmental factors, as being important. Dalgleish goes on to testify that, for environmental volunteers, the main motivation is generally some environmental connection. There may also be social motives but these are often ‘generated by the common interest in the environment’ (ibid: 8). When considering community-based environmental projects, recognition of more varied motivations are accepted where the environment is often not the starting point, but instead an engagement from wanting to be involved or to interact socially. This is a point that will be reflected in the motivations discussed in the rest of the chapter.

Ockenden (2007), in his literature review of volunteering in the natural outdoors for the Institute of Volunteering Research cited four main motivational drivers for volunteers to get involved in this type of work. These were a love of nature, environmental awareness, social and cultural factors and to enhance skills and employability. The first two are more transparently environmental while the final two are factors that could be considered as being attributable to non-environmental volunteering as well. However, Ockenden considers these latter reasons as working in combination with the environmental motivations to drive the individual volunteer to get involved. The most recent studies into environmental volunteering motivations were conducted by O’Brien *et al.* (2008; 2010) for the Scottish Forestry Trust and Forestry Commission. Motivations here are led by an environmental awareness and appreciation. From this point, training and skill acquirement, the need for activity and the need for personal contact and encouragement begin to grow. Importantly, they go on to describe the benefits to the individual and the community that can be accrued from the volunteering and how this can reinforce the motivations. It is with this point in mind that the start of this section is concerned with the initial motivations of environmental volunteering.

5.3 Initial motivations to volunteer

These initial motivations to volunteer have been split into ‘environmental’ and ‘non-environmental’ motivations. This has been done to differentiate between the motivations that have a basis in the environmental, nature or landscape connections, and those that can be applied to other general forms of volunteering. This then helps to identify what is distinct about motivations to become involved in environmental volunteering.

Table 5.1: Environmental and non-environmental initial motivations to volunteer.

Environmental Motivations	↔	Non-environmental Motivations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Scalar connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global environmental concern • Concern for local green area/s • See more of Scotland • Feel a connection to Scotland • Pride in local landscape ❖ Temporal associations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility • Sustainability • Stewardship • Long-term change • Seasonal cycle connection • Planting of trees ❖ Personal well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment of the ‘outdoors’ • Aesthetic landscape appreciation • Gain a spiritual connection with nature • Pure enjoyment • Love of trees • Altruism • Ethos ❖ Removal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel to a green location • Envelop oneself in a perceived therapeutic environment • Holiday 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Social factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet new people • Become part of the community • New to the area • Encouraged by a friend/relative ❖ Keeping active <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to be of service • Make a difference • Be pro-active • Improve physical fitness • Other volunteering interests ❖ Personal well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build self-confidence • Have fun • Apply own skills and experiences • Take responsibility for one’s own health and well-being ❖ Acquire skills/training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain practical experience • Learn new skills ❖ Removal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get away from regular job • Get away from home life • Leave behind troubles

Using Table 5.1 as a starting point the environmental motivations to get involved are discussed, using volunteer quotes to illustrate this. The non-environmental motivations will then be discussed. The table has been presented to emphasise the importance of not just the initial motivations, but those of the environmental motivations that are represented in the first column. As the two-way arrow alludes to in Table 5.1, these motivations are by no way stand alone and exclusive. This blurring of boundaries and these interconnections between motivations will become more apparent in Section 5.4.

5.3.1 Environmental motivations to volunteer

a) Scalar connections

This category covers the motivations that involve a connections with environmental characteristics across various scales including global, national, regional and local levels.

A general global environmental concern was most apparent, but not exclusive, to those individuals that volunteered for the two more obvious ‘removal groups’, Scottish Forest Restoration Project (SFRP) and Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV). In the use of the term ‘removal group’ the idea of an individual being out of place is central. This is most obvious in the case of groups where volunteers travel a greater distance to conduct the work, often in a very different landscape than they are used to. This draws on Conradson’s first theme of well-being in a natural environment: a distance from everyday routines and domestic demands (Conradson, 2005b). However, volunteers can continue to be out of place in relatively local surroundings and still gain benefits from this. The global outlook of volunteers took a number of forms, including pessimism of what the future may hold for the Earth and a feeling of connection to the plight of the world in general:

'I sometimes have this warped view, you know, when they say about global warming and this, that and the other is going to cause drought and famine, it's going to wipe us all off the face of the Earth and I think, good, perhaps we should be wiped off the face of the Earth'

(Rhona, SFRP)

'I've got more and more concerned about the environment as time's gone by but I couldn't give you a time or an age or a date or anything: I've no idea when it started to happen, like a lot of people starting to get very concerned about what's happening out there. So my way round it, given busy jobs and schedules and family commitments etc was to join organisations when I thought they needed my help'

(John, SFRP)

The sentiments of the above quotations, which reflect aspects of both optimism and pessimism concerning the global environment, were consistent themes in many volunteer responses. Understanding humans as part of the world, as opposed to separate to it, and understanding the impacts humans have had on global environmental problems strongly influenced thoughts on these scales:

'I was reconnecting with that small patch but it was opening up the whole sense of global earth, Gaia thing, so having that opportunity made me realise that our ancestors were doing more symbolic rituals'

(Larry, SFRP)

The action of physically performing the volunteering had a very direct connection with an emotionally important (albeit small) area of land, but this created connections to a larger scale. This concern also involved aspects of ethics, stewardship and responsibility that will be discussed later in the section considering the time element of the initial motivations.

On the scale below this, a more national scale, the volunteers with SFRP listed seeing more of Scotland and feeling a connection with Scotland as a motivation to do a work-week with the group:

'I personally didn't come here to make myself feel better about anything, I feel okay, but I did come here to see a beautiful area, and that might sound like quite a superficial reason but I've come here to see an area I've always wanted to see since I can remember as a child'

(Jake, SFRP)

'we do Scotland because it's the only place that feels like we're at home, I don't know why? It must be the Celtic influence... way back on my Gran's side we're Scottish'

(Rhona, SFRP)

Both Jake and Rhona had family ties with Scotland and had happy experiences and memories of being taken to these areas as children. This contributed to their decision to come back to this area and volunteer. There were five reasons that were cited for doing environmental work in Scotland particularly: an aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of the land; a feeling of connection to the land; family ties; holidays here as a child and a need to look after the land and forestry in one's own 'backyard'. Connections with childhood and global concerns are therefore apparent:

'Oh yeah, I'm concerned with what is going on over in Brazil and other, you know, rainforests, but what can I do about that? Em... I can come over here, not far from where I live and maybe make a difference.'

(Evan, EEV)

'We were a caravanning family when I was young so I got to see a lot of Scotland. I almost forgot about how much I enjoyed that until I moved back up here... you can still get that sense of fun when your outside, more like back then'

(Delia, CEG)

Within these motivations there are issues of spirituality, responsibility, stewardship and childhood experience that filter through. The past experience of a volunteer's connection with the outdoors strongly influenced responses to the environmental motivations of volunteering. Many would refer to childhood holidays or parents encouragement for them to spend more time either in the garden or further afield in green spaces as their initial spark of interest. This seed was planted at a young age and even though there may have been intermediate years of the individual not being in the natural outdoors to the same extent (as was the case with Delia), they have come to revisit these experiences again.

On a regional scale, Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV) were most active. Although sharing sentiments of global and national concern, members of this group work within a regional area. This was partly due to time constraints (the majority of this work is done on a one-day outing at the weekend), but also the desire to still have the removal experience. This does not have the same perception of 'wilderness' experience as with SFRP but the locations are still removed enough from the city to provide that sense:

'I speak to Kim during a pause in the tree-felling. She is looking over at the view from where we are standing and comments that it is unbelievable that this is so close to the city and says that not many people realise how great the countryside here is.'

(EEV field diary)

These regional areas can therefore be viewed as subsequently far enough away from daily life to be slightly more exotic than the everyday encounters of a local park or community

space. Being close to the environment in an uncommon way (Conradson, 2005b) therefore becomes important. The surprise and delight of being under an hour from a city home, but still being able to be inspired by the surrounding countryside gives that interaction. This can also be reflected in the local scale of two of the other case study groups.

The local scale work was carried out mostly by the Friends of Southside Park (FSP) and the Community Environment Group (CEG). All the core members and interviewees of FSP were residents that surround the park. The CEG volunteers lived in the one small town of around 13,000 people and conducted tasks concerning environmental work in this area. Local motivations, including being a user of the local park and green areas, and wanting to get things done in the local community to clean up the local green spaces were given as local scale motivations to get involved with the groups:

'I'm not one to just sit back and moan about something, I'd rather do something about it, so the river cleanup, although that was back maybe 5 years, I arranged river cleanups for two maybe three years before the 'Friends of' got kicked off.'

(George, FSP)

'I liked being part of the community but I loved Southside Park, so the two coming together, that seemed like an ideal combination. So I was like 'oh, I'm up for that', certainly I was very keen to be involved in anything that involved that park because I wanted to take an interest in what they were going to do with the park.'

(Barbara, FSP)

Even these environmental motivations have clear overlaps with being part of the community, being pro-active and making a difference. Importantly, however, the motivations are not always from a starting point of environmental concern, with FSP and CEG the motivation was often non-environmental and socially driven to begin with. There was therefore a blurring between the underlying environmental interest (with the park or

with green spaces within the community) and the non-environmental driver of becoming more involved in the actions of the local community and the making of friendships within a local area. In the case of NSA, the focus of the founder and the other volunteers was protecting a specific piece of land. Their motivations to become involved had two specific goals. These were to clean-up an area of green space and develop it into a community gardening and recreational resource and also campaign against council plans to sell the land for private residential development. This was very much focussed on this bounded area of land and the volunteers were generally from the streets surrounding this space.

b) Temporal associations

The passing of time across different levels of experience, imagination, species and season each came out during the interviews. The most commonly used theme was that of a feeling of responsibility to act and also a sense of looking after the environment for future generations. These future generations included not only people, but generations of trees and landscapes.

i) Responsibility and stewardship

As the quotations below show, the feeling of stewardship was not only for future generations of people, but for the future of the environment. These issues are covering scales from the volunteers' lifetimes, to the lifetimes of future generations of humans and then beyond this towards the future and sustainability of the environment in general.

'it's partly responsibility but also it's erm... well it's a kind of nice thing to be doing, an opportunity to do something that will benefit future generations'

(Caroline, SFRP)

'I certainly feel an obligation to do my bit, then hand over I guess to the younger generations coming through and I think there's a lot more concern than there used to be (about the environment)... and as I say, kids now are taught more about it and invariably that will then filter through, a percentage of them will care when they leave school... it's refreshing to see older members of the team who, their generation generally weren't so concerned but they are, some of them are now concerned enough to come off and do work weeks like this'

(John, SFRP)

'I believe in sustainability, with sustainable energy for sustainable development... the human aspect of what I am part of is to be a steward, of my stewardship responsibility to override the conditioning of one's culture, to have a sense of it being a timeless experience of unity, a reverence, a form of prayer in some way.'

(Larry, SFRP)

The quotations above help to illustrate two of the major distinctions of specifically environmental volunteering. The consideration of volunteer perceptions of scale and time are very apparent. Motivations can be determined by anything from local to global scales, but also across these scales. They may also be determined by the short-term goals of a specific task or project. However, these tasks will often be taking into account the implications that the work will have across future decades and centuries, for not only humans but also the environment in general. In SFRP this was most apparent through the lifespan of a tree and of the landscape. The awareness of being able to know that they were going to leave a 'legacy' (Lois, SFRP) was an important motivation. Volunteers from other groups also expressed similar sentiments, but for a stewardship of their local park or area, as a way to balance what they seen as the wildness of the park and the park users:

'There has to be some give or take. I was sad to see the castle go as that was part of the history of the park but I understood why. Lots of people use the park, em, dog walkers,

runners, people with kids... we want to make sure people know about the park more but also that they look after what is inside it and what makes it special.'

(Hannah, FSP)

Hannah is alluding towards the balance that has to be reached when volunteering for FSP. There are many stakeholders in the park and the volunteers need to balance their aims within this environment. Being able to manage the built and natural heritage of the park and how this is taken into the future by the various stakeholders would often result in compromises being made. Short-term aims and concerns had to be dealt with but longer term aims also had to be considered.

ii) Long-term change, planting of trees and seasonal cycles

When considering aspects of the above responsibility and stewardship this was often with a view to initiating long-term change on a landscape. This was most often vocalised through the planting of trees, due to their longer life span and the impact they can have on the whole landscape:

'I think that is the most important thing. I don't really go in for all the climate change thing, well, not so severely but I know that we have cleared a lot of trees up here. To put them back is up to us. It was our fault and we should fix it for the future. Not just people, you know, but for the land'

(Joe, SFRP)

Joe is laying the responsibility of the clearing of forests on human actors and feels that is up to humans (including himself) to redress this imbalance. He could physically see the bare moorlands that have been cleared of trees and recognises this as an area in which he

can take action. The seasonal cycles were also referred to often, both in terms of seasons but also moon cycles and an ancient connection with nature:

'The weather makes a difference. We can have a great time in pouring rain but I can't deny that I do choose when I do a work-week, I like the sun and prefer being out doing this in the summer. I get a better feeling from that time.'

(Natalie, SFRP)

'We go out at the equinox and have a big bonfire. We did it at midnight last time around the bonfire and we all brought a gift for the earth. It was soooo cold but it was fun to do. Not everyone had done something like that before but everyone got involved in the chants and stuff. I think it's important to be aware of these changes and not let them pass you by, we should stay connected.'

(Roisin, CEG)

Natalie is highlighting her preference of working in warmer summer weather and choosing when she volunteered to try and fit in with these times where possible, linking her enjoyment of the volunteering to the bright summer work-weeks that she has taken part in previously. Roisin is being more pensive about her connection with the passing of time, highlighting the need for her to be more mindful of changing lunar cycles and seasons. She was the unofficial organiser of CEG's equinox and solstice bonfires. Her volunteer work and the connections and friendships that she made helped her to share this passion with others.

c) Personal well-being and environmental motivations

The scale and time sections above have been focussing primarily on largely altruistic notions of environmental motivations, be it a global concern or a feeling or responsibility. On a more personal level, there were a number of well-being issues that were directly

environmentally motivated. The most vocalised in interviews across the case study participants was that of an enjoyment of the ‘outdoors’. This was often linked with a spiritual/emotional connection with being in nature and, to a similar extent, an aesthetic appreciation of natural landscapes. The importance of tree-love and the ability of trees to make volunteers happy was also very prominent in the tree-focussed SFRP:

‘I love trees, I had almost forgotten from way back then. I do, I think there is something about trees that people love, and I can’t really explain why trees make people happy but I think they do in a lot of ways’

(Danielle, SFRP)

This confusion over a love and connection with trees was repeated often. Volunteers tried to justify this in a number of ways. Hannah (SFRP) suggested that there is a biological/chemical response from people to trees. Larry considered it as trees ‘expanding the lungs of Mother Earth’. The time-scale of a tree life, mentioned above, was also given as a possible reason. In a similar way, the thought of trees being carbon sinks was seen as a positive thing, especially in the new growth stage. So there was definitely both an emotional and an environmentally practical aspect to this attachment to trees in particular.

The tree-love links in with a more general spiritual connection with nature. Iain (EEV) spoke at length about how enveloping himself in this ‘getting back to a spiritual nature bond’ experience helped him get over troubled times after problems in a relationship. The attraction of being enveloped in the landscape, as well as the task provided him with that removal aspect that permeates through many of the volunteer starter motivations. Iain is Volunteer Case Study A, below. This shows the importance of environmental volunteering throughout Iain’s life. This is the first of four volunteer case studies in this chapter that frame individual volunteer stories.

Volunteer Case Study A – Iain, Eastern Environmental Volunteers

Iain describes himself as a ‘life volunteer’. I interviewed him when on an EEV work-weekend but he also took part in over twenty weeks of volunteering a year, including weeks with SFRP. As well as this, he worked for a governmental environmental agency.

He became involved originally in environmental volunteering and continued to do so through a ‘global concern with the future’ but he also expressed how this has helped him through traumatic times:

‘I broke up with my girlfriend a couple of years ago and it was a hard time. If it wasn’t for this work then I’m not sure if I would have got through it. This helped me to see the, maybe the bigger picture. Maybe that or it just took my mind of things.’

He said he didn’t think it would help as much in the beginning, with regards to his mental well-being, but went on to say:

‘Absolutely, I’m crazy enough as it is. Without this, I’d go totally off my trolley!’

This original environmental concern that Iain possessed led him into the volunteering lifestyle, but along the way he had picked up on benefits that he perhaps did not originally foresee. This theme will be expanded on in Section 5.5 of this chapter on continuing motivations to volunteer.

The satisfaction of sharing an organisation’s ethos and being able to do something altruistic for the environment was important to some of the volunteers when deciding the volunteering group they would work with. The well-being that is gained through not only a physical group connection is also reinforced by this spiritual connection with the group and the other individuals:

‘When I come here it is not like meeting a whole bunch of new people. You guys are like an extension of me. Sometimes I think it is either me or the world that is going mad, you know, and when I come here it helps to know that it isn’t me.’

(Clive, SFRP)

Clive was passionate about his beliefs and shared the above thought to the group. He later attributed this feeling to not only the individuals that were there, but to the wider group of

volunteers that have taken part in SFRP work-weeks. There was therefore a crossover between organisational and individual goals. One FSP volunteer speaks about the goals of the group being the same as his own:

'I think it's more opening up the park and making people more aware that the park is here and getting people back into the park, but at the same time protecting the environment... it's a balance and it's kind of a wild park area, its not one where you've got nice flower arrangements here-there-and-everywhere, it's quite wild and it's good for walks... so it's kind of a balance, personally, and I think it was the group's intention that we wanted to improve the amenities within the park and get people back into the park, because it's a fabulous facility for lots and lots of people living around about it...so increased awareness, that was one thing, second thing is to balance the conservation within the park.'

(George, FSP focus group)

This sharing of values is also important when considering the social and personal factors of non-environmental motivations. It was these motivations that were showing themselves to be central in the local community groups. There is a blurring between an environmental drive here and a motivation to feel a connection with others by sharing similar views and feelings. This manifested itself by the group experience and the ability to share, not only an experience, but an achievement. The idea of 'removal' is one that shares aspects of this sociability, but also exhibits very complex personal and solitary interactions with the volunteering.

d) Removal

This aspect of motivation is a two-sided coin. On one side, it is what the volunteer is removing themselves from. This can be a job, personal life or to leave behind or recover from trouble or trauma. On the other side, it is where the volunteer then goes to. The act of

travelling to a location that the volunteer would view as attractive and potentially therapeutic is important. The former are the reasons to seek a recharging experience or holiday, what pushes the volunteer away from that situation. The latter are environmental factors that the volunteer can see as being able to help them. Removal, as it is considered here and explored in the thesis, is a voluntary distancing of both the body (and mind) from everyday demands. The term removal is used to show how this can be a physical or emotional relocation that can be both deliberately, or accidentally, invoked by a volunteer. Terms such as 'relocation' and distancing' did not capture the emotional, as well as the physical, aspects of the impacts of this removal.

A number of SFRP volunteers specifically named a work-week as a holiday experience and a way to become refreshed⁴:

'It's a week on holiday... it's the first week I've had off, I've had a few days here and there but it's the first week... and I said to Larry today when he asked me what I did, I haven't thought about it at all this week and it's been quite nice. I think I'll go back refreshed and ready to go. After eight months of every day in and out of work, you get bored of it and it's nice to come and take a step back and think about things, all sorts of things, when you're up on the mountain and you are planting by yourself I think it is a good way to detox your mind cause everything just goes.'

(Peter, SFRP)

'This is holiday... my work is very much based sitting in an office so, and I don't particularly like that...I don't like being indoors all the time. So any opportunity to get outdoors and do something really is a bonus.'

(Graeme, SFRP)

⁴ As of 2011, SFRP had moved away from marketing their volunteer weeks as 'work-weeks'. The website now described them as a 'conservation holiday'. This reflects the language of many of the volunteers in the way that they described and viewed their volunteering with this group. The weeks are still organised and structured in exactly the same way as before.

The removal aspect was a motivation that featured most obviously in both the SFRP and EEV groups. In saying this, as mentioned previously, local groups could still find that physical and mental, out-of-place removal, by being in different landscapes. One FSP member mentioned the importance of not being able to see any buildings:

'I could be anywhere, it doesn't matter that I am ten minutes from the centre of Glasgow when I am out there'

(Barbara, FSP)

The mental removal of being in this landscape can also be applied:

'I can be just over the next mound and I could be anywhere, it's quiet and I find that great... I don't often get peace when I'm out and about, but I can in Southside Park'

(Hannah, FSP)

This language was similar to that used by members of EEV when describing their regional task days and shows how Hannah values these solitary and quiet moments. The volunteers were recognising a mental removal in areas that are not as removed in terms of distance as SFRP. This feeling of removal in a local area can be further influenced by the task and the changing landscape of the area. This will be expanded on in Chapter 6. The next section will go on to discuss the non-environmental motivations.

5.3.2 Non-environmental motivations

The importance of non-environmental factors take a stronger significance across the majority of the categories when it comes to the more local and community based groups of FSP and the CEG. Social factors, personal well-being and keeping active are strongly

featured here. However, this category for non-environmental motivations is still represented in the other two removal groups.

a) Social factors within environmental volunteering

A number of members of FSP, CEG and EEV were motivated to volunteer after having moved to a new area. This was with the thought of either meeting new people, getting to know the area better or becoming more involved in the community. Often these motivations did not stand alone for the volunteer. Instead, this involved a cross-over of incentives that would complement each other. The initial spark of interest frequently came from a friend or relative suggesting a particular task or group. This could either adopt the form of them taking part in volunteering together, or as a suggestion of an activity to get involved in:

'My dad actually saw an article in... I don't know where he saw it, I'll have to ask him... he'd noticed it was my kind of thing... and I looked at it and just read about it and liked the sound of it.'

(Erin, SFRP)

There were also a number of couples who volunteered for the groups together and also ones who met partners through their volunteering activity, although this was not necessarily a reason for them getting involved in the volunteer work to begin with:

'I met my wife through doing volunteering at university and since we moved up here we have kept it going, we both like it. She probably keeps me at it and is more passionate but we do like to do it together, it helps keep us, em, going.'

(Evan, EEV)

'It might be a different experience for you being here alone. Being here as a couple we do share more things but we can go and talk to people and get to know people as well. I'm not saying I wouldn't have come without Graeme but it would have been different'

(Linda, SFRP)

The volunteering therefore gives the opportunity to either share a common interest with a loved one, or as an opportunity to discover new individuals and friends to share these experiences with. This may be done individually or, in the case of Evan and Graeme, with their partners. NSA volunteers also began to develop social linkages from the volunteering. The founder, Derek, named his initial motivation as a desire to look after an area of land near his home that he felt could be developed into a community resource. However, as the group grew and he became more involved, his motivation developed into a more complex relationship that involved friendships and community responsibilities. This will be discussed further in Section 5.5 on continuing motivations.

b) Non-environmental motivations and personal well-being

Although many of the personal well-being factors could be related directly to environmental motivations there are a number of non-environmental drivers behind this as well. These were expressed in a number of ways. The ability to have fun and enjoy oneself was the most common response in this category:

'I just like it, I know I've always enjoyed this kind of thing and that's about it really'.

(Davis, SFRP)

This way of expressing what was particularly enjoyable was common. It usually took further questions in an interview for the volunteer to begin to break this down into more

detailed element of the work that first attracted them. Later on in the interview Davis expanded:

'I like putting trees in, I get my main satisfaction out of that. It is a good thing to do and I can do it up here or I can do it down on my own land, it's all good to me.'

(Davis, SFRP)

Davis treated his volunteering very practically. He highlighted his desire to plant as many trees as possible. The satisfaction came from these plantings and the benefits he felt for himself were secondary to that. However, taking responsibility for one's own health and well-being was viewed as being important by many other volunteers. This was vocalised as being both a spiritual, social, and physical responsibility:

'We do all kinds of things now {the volunteer and her husband}, we have been on spiritual retreats and doing things like yoga. I feel better now than I used to, like, maybe more energy, and I've learned new things this week as well from everyone. It's all soul food'

(Lois, SFRP)

While being more prominently a motivation to continue volunteering, some volunteers could see where their own skills and experiences could be applied and were attracted by the ability to impart their knowledge and bring something that would be a positive addition to the group. For example, Tam (EEV) knew he could put his skills as a mechanic to good use by maintaining the minibus that is used for the group's weekend trips. In a different way Irvine (CEG) could use his specialist knowledge of local birds to inform possible projects for the group. This was a benefit to the skills base and progression of the group, but it was also rewarding to the individuals themselves in that they were then in a position to pass on specialist knowledge that no-one else in the group possessed.

c) Keeping active

This motivation could be split into different areas of activity. This was not always just a physical activity or for personal physical health, but also a sense of well-being accrued from being useful and being involved. For most it was a desire to be able to make a difference either in their local area or on a global scale. It was to gain that feeling of contribution and of achievement. For those who were concerned about the global climate and the negative impact humans were having, they often wanted to lose the feeling of helplessness. The environmental desire to help is prominent in this sense of keeping active and feeling a need to help and contribute. Linda (SFRP) says ‘I need to feel I’m helping or I get frustrated’. She felt that she has to set an example to others. Larry (SFRP) re-enforces this by quoting Gandhi and saying that ‘you must be the change that you wish to see’. Zanda expresses a very different aspect of ‘keeping active’:

Volunteer Case Study B – Zanda, Eastern Environmental Volunteers

On my first work day with EEV, Zanda is the first person to speak to me. When I tell him how long it took me to get there on the train his response is:

‘fucking trains, they’re much better in India.’

He is a return volunteer that knows most of the people in the group and is comfortable in their company. The reply he gave me about the trains seems to reflect the general way he interacts with the other volunteers. I get talking to him throughout the work day. He uses the language of ‘earning’ his unemployment benefits. The main motivation here for him was that he was unemployed at the time and his volunteering helped him to feel the ability to actively contribute something useful and also go some way towards justifying his government benefits money. The physical and embodied aspect of this comes across as being central to him:

‘I always bring my own axe, they don’t give you one here and I prefer to take down the bigger trees...it’s great bloody work, it gets you going.’

This destruction element was shown amongst a number of volunteers with EEV and also other groups and will be discussed further in the following chapter.

I followed this comment by asking him if he does not mind giving up his Sunday but he replied that he has still got his Friday night and Saturday and that it is good to catch up with people anyway.

On the work weekends that were spent with Zanda he often expressed how willing he was to be back in work but put this down to his age (58) and a lack of an employer's willingness to take him on. He was not using his volunteering to gain work experience, however.

In general Zanda expressed motivations to be active and feel useful, to be physically involved but also to see the members of the group, often on a weekly basis. His need to fulfil these desires were central to why he got involved but also why he continues to volunteer with the group.

This pro-active stance was something that resonated in physical fitness as well. The importance of the enjoyment of the physical side of active environmental volunteering was repeated across volunteers in all the groups. Many of these volunteers have background interests in hill-walking or other more physical activities in the outdoors, such as cycling and climbing. Again, the blurred nature of environmental and physical motivations comes through in this section. When asked which tasks most appealed to them it was repeatedly the ones that involved physical exertion and embodied experiences of energy and application that were quoted but that element of it being outdoors came through as well:

'Aye, yeah, I probably enjoy doing them more {work-party days}, I like the bit of physical effort as well, you know, I like getting stuck in and I don't really mind what the weather is and I'd rather get stuck in with a group of people than on my tod'

(Barbara, FSP)

To a lesser extent, there was also the motivation to deliberately improve physical fitness by being more active:

'I have a walking group in Southside Park that I go on most weeks but the volunteer days help as well, the ones where we are helping drainage or tasks like that.'

(Justin, FSP)

In most cases, however, this would be considered as a supplementary impact as opposed to a strong initial motivation as the work with most of the groups can be quite sporadic. In Chapter 6, the importance of the cathartic release of some of the more physical tasks will be discussed.

d) Acquire skills/training

Although highlighted in the studies of O'Brien *et al.* (2008; 2010) this motivation was only really seen to any great extent with the SFRP, with volunteers who either wanted to gain practical experience of the work or to be more educated in the ecological implications that fellow volunteers and group leaders could give them. Caroline (SFRP) wanted to build on her practical gardening experience to improve her chances of getting a job after having qualified in a related university course. Theresa was simply looking for inspiration from the week in the Highlands that she could take into her new journalistic job. A couple of the volunteers who were looking for a career change even saw it as an opportunity to work with the organisation in the future as a group leader. Jason was one of these volunteers that used his volunteer work as an inspiration to change his career:

Volunteer Case Study C – Jason, Scottish Forest Regeneration Project

'It was the whole need to change my life because I don't want to work in an office for the rest of my life and I want to see what else is out there...I've been asked on all the weeks so far if I want to be a group leader and I would definitely do that at some point... I would definitely move into that in the future... it would be just about the perfect job I would think'

Jason had been considering a change in career for some time, to get away from his current job in IT, to something more environmental and educational.

He had been involved in both outdoors groups and bird-watching groups when younger and this had also influenced him to re-start some of those interests. He also stated:

‘there was a good spiritual side to it, a good ethos behind what they were doing and the goals...achieving this large area of Caledonian woodland’

Jason spoke about how he felt he wanted these two normally separate parts of his life to come together, his environmental ethos and his work life. He has now quit his IT job in London and is looking to find a full-time environmentally based job in the Highlands. He will also be working as a part-time group leader in future SFRP work-weeks.

e) Removal and non-environmental motivations

Finally, for non-environmental motivations, the other side of the removal coin must be discussed. These are the factors that were stated as being a motivation for the volunteer to leave a regular space or routine and seek out a release. The most commonly stated was the desire to get away from a job, then to leave behind troubles in general, and finally, to get away from home life (although this was rare):

‘I really don’t want to go back to my boss at work. She is one of those people, you know? I came here to get away from all that hassle that I left behind.’

(Rhona, SFRP)

‘I had a hard time a good few years ago with my family. It’s a long story but we haven’t spoke since. This has helped me with that, maybe it was deliberate, I’m not sure’

(Danielle, SFRP)

The majority of the volunteers who stated they wanted to get away from a job they were not enjoying were those based in office work. This was apparent across all the case study

groups. To get away from troubles and home life could be seen as far more apparent in SFRP. The holiday removal and wilderness location of this group seemed to be the driving force behind this motivation. When asked what she wanted to take away from her week of volunteering Erin responded, ‘I feel that it will probably help me. I feel like I recently lost a lot of my self confidence and I think it’s probably going to help me with that’. The loss of self confidence was due to a breakdown in a relationship and Erin hoped this experience could help her regain some of that. This was something she viewed as being harder to do if she was in her everyday situation. Even within CEG this removal can be seen. In this case the volunteer is still within his community but discovering new things about the area:

‘We are involved in the historical society as well, we use both of them to find out about our area. It takes us away to different places that we never even knew existed. We found an old, walled orchard the other day when looking for a good place to do community plantings. It felt like being in a whole new world, or maybe old world (laughs)’

(Eric, CEG)

Eric hints at the feeling of going back in time, to how things used to be. This temporal removal is repeated across the groups, especially those looking to restore areas:

‘It is like looking back in time over there {looking towards a natural area of Caledonia pine forest}. Just imagine if all the land was still covered like that’

(Janet, SFRP)

As mentioned previously, these feelings of new discovery in familiar locations and connections through time were important in where many volunteers placed their ethics and motivations. This helped blur environmental and non-environmental motivations. This highlights that the motivations cross over the boundaries between being solely

environmental or non-environmental. There is instead, a merging of motivations that are highlighted below.

5.4 Cross-over motivations

Table 5.1 was used to categorise the volunteers' motivations into environmental and non-environmental motivations. This was completed with the aim of showing the relative importance of the environmental motivations on why volunteers got involved with the various case study groups that were studied. As was touched upon above, however, the motivations cannot exclusively be categorised as either environmental or non-environmental. The two examples, expanded on below, show the motivations that cross-over this boundary.

5.4.1 Altruistic motivations

These were concerned with issues of scale and time and reflect the volunteers' ethical outlooks and past experiences. This was exemplified through childhood experiences of either environmental issues or contact with other forms of volunteering when younger. These filtered through each of the case-study groups to some extent but were most prominent in those members of the Scottish Forest Regeneration Project. Eastern Environmental Volunteers also exhibited these motivations but in a more balanced manner with personal motivations. This may be partly attributable to these volunteers being more involved at a larger scale (global/national) than the local community groups that have a more social dimension. These motivations were ones that could stand across environmental and non-environmental aspects and reflected a volunteer's wider ethical viewpoint. Volunteers would refer to motivations that they viewed as bigger than themselves in terms of scale, but also in terms of importance. These included the ethics around responsibility

and stewardship and were not vocalised by the volunteers as being related to their own personal well-being.

5.4.2 Personal well-being motivations

These motivations also stemmed from both environmental and non-environmental categories. These include enjoyment and fun, social contact, community involvement, physical enjoyment and keeping active. Across these motivations was an overt desire to conduct volunteering that would benefit their own personal well-being. Each of these motivations could be applied to any form of volunteering, but it was the underlying interaction with environmental motivators that developed this sense of well-being. This could take the form of an emotional well-being that was reflected in making friendships and sharing experiences with others with the similar goals and ethics that are environmentally driven. There were also instances where physical well-being was a motivator. This meant physically and actively taking part in volunteer activities to either keep fit or to just enjoy being in the natural outdoors. Being active meant not just being physically involved, but also meant being socially involved with others. These all cross over with each other in the tasks and landscapes in which the volunteering takes place. These particular interactions will be discussed in Chapter 6. When considering initial motivations for taking part it becomes apparent that volunteers would speak about how these motivations could be fulfilled, but also speak about how they could change through the volunteering experience.

5.5 Continuing motivations to participate in environmental volunteering

The initial motives to become involved in the environmental volunteer work cross-over in many aspects with the continuing motivations that reinforce why the volunteer stays with

the group. These continuing motivations still cover the range of initial motivations that volunteers expressed as being important. This section examines the claim of functional analysis that the volunteer experience is largely dictated by the fulfilment of the initial motivations (Finkelstein, 2009). The ethos of looking after the environment, the obligations of stewardship and responsibility, enjoyment and appreciation of a perceived natural landscape, making friends and being active in the community all play strong roles in the continuing motivations as well as the initial motivations. A number of these similarities will be briefly discussed but the following section will be primarily focused on what is distinctive about continuing motivations in terms of fulfilment, unexpected impacts, the constant struggle to preserve, restore and upkeep a landscape and the importance of building a relationship with a place. Much of this will relate to particularly returning volunteers who have been volunteering over a period of time, either in the same areas or with the same environmental ethos.

5.5.1 Fulfilment of initial motivations

The importance of the volunteers satisfying one or all of their initial motivations to start volunteering was extremely important. This was often the measurement by which a volunteer judged whether an experience had been successful or not. This took the form of the volunteers acknowledging that their reason for returning was linked to why they first began volunteering or what they saw as being significant to them. This covers a number of initial motivations and is not only fulfilment, but also the feeling of the experience exceeding expectations. In some cases this would make the return drive even stronger:

'I get a good feeling out of knowing I've done something positive and undeniably worthwhile. Yeah, it's just knowing that you can go out and do something to change things and, sort of, what I was saying to the other guys yesterday, while we were planting, after my first work week it was quite a revelation thinking, yeah, I can go and change things

around me and it's alright to do that and it's okay to do bigger things, so... yeah, that was quite empowering... so what keeps me coming back would be that feeling of adding bit by bit, of seeing the project grow and knowing that there is one area that keep being added to, and just wanting to do what I can, when I can.'

(Hannah, SFRP)

'I thought I would meet new people through the group and I have made some great friends, people that I maybe wouldn't have, you know, got to know before in normal life. That's been great to realise that to have those things in common with what started as strangers and now I see them all the time.'

(Evan, EEV)

'Perhaps it would be different if I had been from up here but I have always seen pictures of Scotland and thought "wow", and I wanted to come up and see the area for myself. I knew it would be beautiful but being there in the rain, with the smells and everything, it just got me hooked and I have been coming up ever since.'

(Sheena, SFRP)

The continuing motivations are therefore reinforced by these positive experiences. The motivations of doing something worthwhile, making friends, and seeing and physically experiencing beautiful parts of Scotland were all fulfilled. This turned these individuals into return volunteers. This can also work both ways. Feelings of frustration can build up if expectations are not being met. This can be experienced on an individual or group level. Individuals may feel they do not fit in with the group or that they are not enjoying the work that is being carried out. Also, frustrations with the progress of the group and the (in)ability for them to achieve their goals can affect the whole group. This is further explored in Chapter 8 and looks at how one potential case-study group found it difficult to continue when they felt that their voice was not being heard.

5.5.2 *Unexpected impacts*

One of the unique aspects of the continuing motivations is that these are often not necessarily the reasons for which the volunteer first began with the group. This can be due to circumstances changing over time in the volunteers lives or it can simply be unexpected impacts that influence why the volunteer returns to work with the group. These can manifest themselves as a whole range of motivations that have been mentioned previously as this quote illustrates:

‘Well, I think initially it was twofold. It was the whole need to do something to change my life because I don’t want to work in an office for the rest of my life and I want to see what else is out there. And secondly, the environmental aspect really... those two are probably initial reasons for doing it. But having gone on the first week I kind of got, addicted is a strong word, but I kind of found this compulsion to go to Inverness railway station again and sit there and wait for another bunch of volunteers to turn up and go, “oh who am I going to be getting on this week? What’s going to be going on there?” Because it’s really quite cool walking into a situation where you potentially don’t know anybody at all and they’re all kind of in the same boat as well and you know they’re going to be just as open as you are to meeting because that’s why they’ve come along, so it’s great from that point of view as well definitely. And I think that it’s probably, I wouldn’t say its overtaken the other two because those other goals are obviously extremely important but it’s certainly is up there.’

(Jason, SFRP)

The impact of this arrival will be discussed further in the next chapter but it is clear that the excitement created by meeting new people in this unusual way is something Jason now enjoys and is one of his motivations to continue volunteering in this way, even if it may have been an area of apprehension before. From originally valuing a life change and having an environmental concern he has found another, very different, but powerful motive to volunteer.

'I'm not going to lie to anybody, when I came into this I was quite dubious that it was going to be tree-hugging fairies but after meeting everybody it's been a brilliant week and I don't know if I'll be back here, but I want to do something like this again and being out on the mountains, you don't realise the scale of what's happened (deforestation) ... I'll definitely do something like this again.'

(Peter, SFRP)

Peter was a first-time volunteer with SFRP and he came up to the Highlands with a friend, on a bit of an impulse, but also to try something new and have a holiday. From being somewhat cynical about the experience in general, he found himself becoming concerned about the scale of the native forest removal in the Highlands. As well as this, he has made friends that he still keeps in contact with and has been stimulated to take part in other forms of volunteering. These were both unexpected outcomes to when he first started. Barbara and George speak about how they experienced different initial and continuing motivations:

Volunteer Case Study D – Barbara and George, Friends of Southside Park

Barbara was strongly involved in the fundraising process of running the group. This mainly involved submitting applications to various bodies to try and obtain funds for the group in general, or for certain projects within the park. This was not seen as a role that she would be fulfilling when she joined the group, but she gained satisfaction from this:

'if you can achieve some success it definitely motivates you to "we can actually achieve more", you know, than we probably ever thought we were gonna achieve. We didn't set up this group thinking "we're going to apply for grants", it just came along as a possibility, that's the way it started, you know, "oh, we could maybe do that" and the success certainly does breed, I wonder if even now, even if we didn't get any success from now for a period of time I think what we've already had would still keep us motivated for quite a time to come, we'd say "well we did succeed before and we will again."

(Barbara)

'This one (application), however stressful and time consuming, is also quite exciting because of the stages we find it just, just quite a buzz

coming from the different stages...when you get told your going through to the next bit, you know, it's quite "oooooh" you get quite a buzz... there's definite satisfaction in getting through...we've been very fortunate and very lucky that we've had quite a lot of success with them, so that encourages you in itself 'cause if you're successful with the one thing then you think, "oh, well I'll go for the next", and even just to get this far you do thing you must be doing something right so let's keep going.'

(Barbara)

George took the minutes in the committee meetings and was one of the original members of the group.

'I think a sense of achievement, I always enjoy the work and in life if I do a job then I do it well or try to do it well, and I get a sense of achievement out of that, which always gives me a kick. So if we do do a work-party thing, and we make a difference, then that's a reward for me...and doing the minutes was a chore at the beginning, but I'm getting better at it so I...I get a sense of achievement out of doing minutes even because from my early days I was always crap at English and never good at English at all and so I'm getting better and better at it, so now I think I'm reasonable at English and I can do reasonable reports at work...to be able to have learnt that skill through work and be able to use it, and I hope do a reasonable job, that gives me a kick. So it's a challenge and I get a kick out of doing it well, or I think well anyway...as long as I think it's well, I get a kick out of it.'

(George)

The attitude of using the positive experiences to help motivate continuation came through strongly in the quotations but also the 'buzz' that can be obtained from achievement and success. Even though this reason was not why the group was formed and was not in the mission statement, it formed a continuing motivation for these members of the group. This does, however, warn of the possibility of individuals or groups becoming disillusioned if applications are unsuccessful.

Irvine was asked whether he had come across any surprising impacts from his experiences in volunteering and how it has affected his future participation:

'I think communication, I think I used to be a lot more hot headed, now I see the global picture, I find now, I think I used to go in with two feet, you know, 5/10 years ago I would be quiet inflammatory in a situation and blown up. I think now you learn skills that, rightly, it's to be cool and actually listen to somebody.'

(Irvine, CEG)

Irvine sees this change in his approach to other viewpoints as being an unexpected strength that he has acquired during his volunteering. John uses an interesting choice of language that is mirrored by a number of volunteers. He goes from saying he has, perhaps unexpectedly, been learning from the week to saying that the volunteer work is a ‘constant fight’:

‘That’s been quite interesting as well so it’s all been a learning curve this week, I’ve learnt a lot as well which has been good fun...I do a lot of reading and not so much research but I’m just aware: I’m interested in environmental concerns. I know there are idiots out there that don’t care and are not doing things that are best for the environment and you sometimes see evidence of that out and about and it does bug me, yeah it does bug me, it’s a constant fight.’

(John, SFRP)

By using the word ‘fight’, John is expressing the struggle that he encounters with those people who do not either share the same belief that he holds. This motivation to continue, to keep up the ‘fight’ against those people who either do not know better, or do not care, is also expressed by Barbara in relation to Southside Park. This language use will be discussed in Section 5.5.4.

5.5.3 Impact of social factors and community

The impact of wanting to meet new people, to become a more active member of the community and to meet people of similar ideas was something that was vocalised often in the initial motivations to volunteer. Similar social themes came through when talking about why volunteers return to group work:

‘Every time I go on these weeks I can genuinely talk to everybody in the group about something and you kinda have all these little conversations and you learn a little bit from

each individual and it makes you a little bit more as a person and it is a good, growing experience.'

(Jason, SFRP)

'This is my third week in a row and after we met at the station and got in the van I got sort of thinking "am I going to survive this week?" as I was getting tired and I had just got rid of eight people and now here's a whole bigger team and I'd heard these stories from Danielle in my first week about having these scary weeks and I wondered what was going to happen this week... but no it's not, it's been great and I'm still probably a little bit tired but in the last few days as everyone has gelled and got used to each other and chatted.'

(Frank, SFRP)

Jason and Frank gained their continued enthusiasm through the social contacts and networks that they encountered in their volunteering. These may not always take the form of life-long friendships but perhaps just the 'little conversations' and connections that Jason describes. NSA founder, Derek, also cited these connections as important to him continuing leading and volunteering with the group. He valued the support he was given by friends within the group, but he also felt a responsibility to the others volunteers to continue this work. According to Derek, this sometimes 'felt a bit like a burden' but it was also rewarding when he could see results of the efforts that the group put in. Caroline has been volunteering for seven years with SFRP. She often spoke of coming back year after year to meet a 'new generation' of volunteers and looked forward to seeing the different people that would turn up:

'I like being with the group and meeting other people with similar ideas but you know, different ones as well, backgrounds, but I also like my space on my own, that's why I like to do my own thing before or after.'

(Caroline, SFRP)

Barbara views the idea of a shared sense of group and community as a production of people who have similar interests and feels this is what draws them back:

'The biggest benefits are definitely the getting to know the group better, the getting the stronger sense of community, definitely, in an enjoyable setting. Getting to know the people who are involved in your group and in the community, while you're doing something that you like and in a place that you like, you know, so we've all got that plus, we're all doing something that we love doing and getting to know all those people that love doing the same things that you do. There's definitely a good social element I think, that's grown quite considerably from it and keeps people coming back.'

(Barbara, FSP)

Again, it is the social networks that individuals build through the volunteering experience with the groups that are seen by Barbara as being central to return involvement. Caroline's point is interesting in that she mentions both social and solitary motivations. This is reflecting Conradson's (2005b) third point of interaction with natural environments and how this can provide opportunities for both solitude and friendships. The volunteer work in these groups encourages elements of both, and gives the individuals opportunities to explore their relationships with others, but also their own personal environment. This will be built on in chapter 6 with discussions around the mind placement of volunteers while they participate in group tasks.

5.5.4 Impacts of landscape and place

The connection to a particular area or space comes through strongly across all the groups when identifying why individuals continue to volunteer. This works across varying scales from a global concern, to the forest planting in the Highlands, to the local park areas:

'I go back to sites and I can see ones that have been grown on or I can go to places that I know other groups have done in previous years and say "oh wow, look at those ones coming on" and you can actually see the landscape changing from year to year. There is a really good picture in the diary we've got which shows you a site, I can't remember, it's ten years or something when they show this site and this tree stump is all barren and then ten years later there is all the ground cover and the trees all growing about and it is an entirely different picture so I am starting to see that happening year after year which is quite exciting.'

(Danielle, SFRP)

Danielle is talking about the temporal aspect of revisiting sites that past members of SFRP have planted on and admiring how these trees have developed. These areas are very site specific but they also give the opportunity to see how these spaces change and develop over time, providing the motivation to revisit these areas. Irvine cites his own experiences of deforestation in Brazil with his reasons for having an environmental concern, but also for his personal well-being:

'But you know basically when you've got a passion for biodiversity, like when you see deforestation of rainforests, being out in the Amazonian jungle and that and you hear the chainsaws in the background and you get, I'm not frightened to say it, I've been crying, you know, you can hear the trees crashing down and you think what the hell is going on? And it is important to get out and do something about it, I think green spaces are, there are so much people stressed now I think you need places like that... And that to me is an anti-stress agent, you know, it's getting out there and enjoying.'

(Irvine, CEG)

Again, Irvine is linking his own actions in the landscape with his wider global concern that he has had personal experience in witnessing. He also directly links this into his own well-being and is aware of how his volunteering helps to be an 'anti-stress agent'. John, as mentioned previously, had an initial motivation to come and see Scotland, for both the

beauty of the land and his own family linkages. His volunteer experience had been the first time he had managed this trip in some time and he does not want that to be repeated:

'I went nine years without {coming back to Scotland} and I swore I'd never do that again, not let it go that long so yeah, there's an affinity there, partly because of the family history, partly because I love it up here, I love the outdoors, it's the only real wild bit of the UK left.'

(John, SFRP)

As referred to earlier Barbara uses another quote to speak about the park and the constant 'battle' that the volunteers are fighting:

'I was gonna say the people side, which came to mind first, but just as strongly I'm not wanting them to change the environmental structure of that Park, you know, the way it is, I wouldn't want them to turn it into another kind of park with lots of bedding plants and things...I quite like bedding plants, don't get me wrong, I don't mind bits of that, but I like the fact that it's quite a woodland park and...we look after it for everybody. I think of it as a bit of a battle, you know, between nature and neds and us!!! {laughter} You're trying to get rid of the vandalism element 'cause they're not doing it and preserving the nature that's already there and keeping it nice for us to use it and future people to use, you know...it is a bit of a battle.'

(Barbara, FSP)

Barbara views their role as having to constantly preserve nature as she sees it in the park, as woodland and not the managed landscape of other parks. At the same time, the 'battle' against the 'neds' is constantly waging. It was a recurring job for the volunteers to clean up graffiti or to bring damaged bins and benches to city councils attention. The 'fight' was therefore never over. This was one of the reasons why Barbara felt an obligation to keep up this work. This language had many similarities with that of other volunteers when describing the battle against global environmental problems where the terms 'struggle',

‘conflict of interests’, ‘contested land’ and ‘long campaign’ were used. The extension of the ethos of responsibility and stewardship runs through these thoughts but not quite in the same spiritual way as discussed earlier, but in more aggressive tone. This is one that puts those with both local and global environmental concerns as being constantly involved in a tussle with people who are opposed to it overtly, or without their knowing. This section has highlighted how continuing motivations can be both an extension and fulfilment of initial motivations, but also how motivations can change over time. This can be related to an attachment to a particular landscape or place and a responsibility or stewardship felt towards these spaces. The making of friends and working with ‘those of the same mind’ is also a motivation to continue volunteering. Furthermore, continuing motivations can again be related to feelings of responsibility, but in this case the responsibility feels like more of an obligation to continue. The importance given to these morphed and unexpected continuing motivations goes against the idea in functional analysis (Finkelstein, 2009) that the volunteer experience is largely dictated by the fulfilment of the original motives. The research here has shown the importance of understanding not just why individuals become involved in environmental volunteering, but what actually occurs and/or changes throughout this involvement. This is one of the reasons for the ethnographic approach and the subsequent in-depth interactions with the case study groups.

5.6 Motivations discussion

Although each volunteer exhibited their own mix of motivations that compelled them to volunteer, similarities could often be identified within the motivations for each group. This chapter has been central in answering the first research question of the initial and continuing motivations for individuals to participate in environmental volunteering. These will be broken down by case-study group and thematically to explore the findings of this chapter.

SFRP volunteers were strongly guided by their ethical and moral obligations to the environment. However, at the same time as this, their decision to volunteer for this group was also influenced by the need for a recharging and removal from their everyday environment and the personal well-being that can be felt from being immersed in the Highland landscape. EEV volunteers had similar elements but the social factor was much more pronounced in influencing their starter motivations. Many volunteers saw this group as a way of getting to know not only new people in an area, but also getting to know the area itself.

FSP, consisting solely of local residents, often did not have the main initial motivation as being environmental. Enjoyment of the outdoors and a pride in the local landscape does play a significant role but being actively involved in the local community and making those social connections were most important. CEG volunteers were very similar to those of FSP in their motivations but the inception of the volunteer work was often very different. CEG operates by having members of the local community raise issues that they feel strongly about, therefore beginning the process from the bottom up. As a result of this, a plethora of different projects are produced and the starter motivations can be even more local and personal to the individual volunteer, while still sharing many of the characteristics that could be seen with CEG. For NSA, the motivation for the founder of the group was to clean up the area of land and develop it as a community garden. This brought with it a politicised role of protesting against the council selling the land to a residential developer. The other volunteers who became involved with the group shared these goals and this provided the motivation to continue with the work. For the founder, a continuing motivation was also the feelings of responsibility to the other volunteers.

Thematically, elements from each of Thoits and Hewitt's models of volunteer work (2001) can be seen as playing a part in these motivations. There are motivations that are very

specific, such as a desire to preserve or improve a specific area of land. These fit within the 'volunteer motivations model', taking into account an individual's aims and goals. The importance of scale and time were consistent and recurring themes throughout this section. Global/local concerns informed many decisions to get involved in this type of volunteering. As well as this, issues of stewardship and responsibility played a strong part. There are similarities here with the 'value and attitudes' model but also some distinct differences. Instead of being a belief in citizenship and civic responsibility that drives the motivations, it is more a belief in the values and aspects of ecological citizenship. This reflects ethics of care (McDowell, 2004) and shows that volunteers have a differing ethical standpoint in terms of values and morals. The issue of volunteers possibly rejecting a notion of citizenship that was directly attached to the state or to a civic or political agenda is discussed in Chapter 7. Past experience of childhood holidays or family connections were also highlighted by some volunteers as strong motivations for them to now participate. The 'role identity model' also stresses the importance of past experiences influencing a future desire to volunteer. Personal well-being and social factors held differing roles, depending on the nature of the group and the past experience of volunteers in certain landscapes, as well as their ethical stance. The sharing of experiences with those of a similar mind within the volunteers group was a continuing motivation that revealed itself on a number of occasions. This fits with Thoits and Hewitt's 'group-identity model' and emphasises the importance of the social networks of support that are built through the volunteering experience. This creates group bonds but also gave volunteers the feeling of achievement in terms of the goals that they themselves can achieve when working with others with shared aspirations. Thoits and Hewitt's final model of volunteering motivations that is useful to engage with here is the 'personal well-being model'. This considers that issues of mental and physical well-being can be motivators for individuals to become involved in group volunteering. This means that individuals are specifically looking to enhance aspects of their well-being through their volunteer work. There were many

examples of the case study participants citing this as a motivation. Some described it very clearly as taking responsibility for their own well-being, while others would refer to the idea more loosely and describe how they had benefited from various aspects of their volunteering. The motivations therefore cross all these models at various points.

In relation to environmentally distinct motivations, the participants' responses have shown that the assertion by Dalgleish (2006) that environmental volunteers generally have a base environmental motivation to be true. This is central to their volunteering in terms of why they become involved and why they continue to volunteer. The responses have also highlighted how community and social factors can also be a starting point to the volunteering, with volunteers joining a group that shares their own values and/or specific goals.

As has been argued by Jupp (2008) and Conradson (2003), however, it is important to go beyond just these vocalised motivations for volunteering and begin to look at the doings and everyday interactions with the volunteer work (Jupp, 2008). Up to now the initial and continuing motivations to volunteer have been discussed without a more detailed consideration being given to the tasks that are being completed. With reflection given to these tasks and the locations in which they are carried out, the next chapter will examine what impacts these factors have on emotional, physical and social well-being.

Chapter 6: Arrival, Task and Landscape

This chapter will explore the active environmental volunteering experience. This chapter is designed to explore volunteer interactions with the themes of embodiment and the importance of ‘being in a place’ (Kearns, 2000). This begins to unravel the importance of the tasks, and the landscapes and spaces where the volunteering takes place. This highlights the significance of the practices, doings and feelings of the volunteering (Jupp, 2008) and gives consideration to the balance between individual and group interactions and the facets of well-being that this can engender. This will retain a particular focus on three aspects of this experience. Section 6.1 will explore the arrival encounters of the volunteers. This looks at not only the arrival of the volunteers in the landscapes of the task, but also the arrival of the volunteers into the social context of the group. This will deal with the expectations, excitements and anxieties of these initial experiences. Section 6.2 will describe and examine the tasks undertaken by the case study groups. This will cover the practicalities of the group and individual tasks, and then go on to explore the multiple meanings of the tasks and the themes that are raised. Section 6.3 will discuss the importance of landscape and nature interactions, looking particularly at temporal and spatial aspects of landscape and volunteer perceptions and relations with nature. The first encounters the volunteers have with these landscapes and the case study groups will be the first aspect to be considered.

6.1 Volunteer arrival encounters

This section leads on from the traditional ethnographic ‘arrival stories’ described by a number of early anthropologists. Herndl (1991) described one of these accounts. This relates to the travels of Zora Neale Hurston in the American South in the 1920s:

'entering the native scene. This trope establishes the fieldworker's presence, authorizes her account, and then allows her to recede from the description that follows.'

(Herndl, 1991: 325)

These accounts looked primarily at the arrival of the researcher in a location. Instead of looking at the arrival stories from solely the researcher's stance, this section will look at the arrival of the volunteers. These encounters link the intention to volunteer and the actual volunteer tasks, revealing insight into initial feelings of excitement or anxiety. They also reveal strong emotions related to the first contact with unfamiliar people or places. There are two different forms of volunteer arrivals that will be described and explored here. The first arrival is when the volunteers meet one another prior to the volunteering activities. Often this is at a designated meeting place that is separate to the location of the volunteering task. In most cases this will take the form of a train or bus station, perhaps a minibus in a city square, a landmark in a neighbourhood park or perhaps a local community centre. It is in these locations that the volunteers meet each other for the first time, their first contact with those strangers that they will be spending the afternoon, day or week with. This represents a linking step between the motivation and commitment to volunteer on the one hand and the actual physical act of embarking on the journey to the place of volunteering. This can entail a number of emotions for the individual. First-time volunteers are often nervous or anxious about the initial meeting or the work itself. Returning volunteers often have feelings of expectation or excitement, especially when having previously had positive volunteering experiences. It is these issues that will be examined here, with particular focus on those individuals who are volunteering for the first time.

6.1.1 The initial arrival experience

The most common arrival experience that every volunteer must go through at some point is the first meeting with other volunteers. This is particularly pronounced with Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP) and Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV) who both meet at specific locations before travelling to the work areas. The initial volunteer arrival experiences will be looked at first.

'I nearly got off the train at the station in Inverness and got straight back on. I felt pretty nervous to be honest... but then I thought I should just go for it... I had taken this time off work after all.'

(Polly, SFRP)

It was Polly's first time to volunteer for the week with SFRP. Although having participated in volunteering and environmental work in the past, it was the prospect of the meeting with strangers that caused her the anxiety. This sense of anxiety was most often the case with volunteers at SFRP and was reported less often by those in other projects. Unless the individual is a volunteer who recognises other return volunteers or the volunteers come with friends or a partner, it is mostly people who have never met before, often with very varied backgrounds and ethos.

'I can see various potential volunteers around the station. I can spot them by the presence of rucksacks, waterproofs and walking boots, and of course the anxious looks around to see if they can spot others. It isn't until a couple who know each other start an impromptu gathering that other volunteers build up the courage to go over. From my vantage point I can hear them asking if they are in the right place and begin the process of introductions.'

(SFRP field diary)

For SFRP work-weeks, after this initial contact described above, the conversation often continued along the lines of volunteers asking if the other person had been before, how far they had travelled to get there and which location they were going to for the week (it was normal for different work-week locations to meet at the same time and place in the station). After a short time the group leaders arrived, introduced themselves and checked everyone had arrived. The volunteers were then led to their minibus and, before going to the accommodation, are driven to a location near where they will be working for the week and shown examples of the type of work that SFRP do and the landscape that the group operates. This involves lunch and a short walk with a talk by the group leaders. This is the first time the volunteers are out in the glen and some of their initial responses to these experiences will be explored later in this section.

Often these initial meetings at the train station will represent a very different emotion to anxiety.

'I'm relieved, I know the feeling I get in the station. I have travelled up from Bristol, I'm away from work and I know what to expect. I might catch up with people I recognize from before which is always exciting but even if I don't, I love meeting the new people that are there... I try to make them feel welcome because I know I was nervous my first time'

(Jason, SFRP)

Jason was a return volunteer who has obviously experienced the initial nervousness on his first work-week but after doing a number of them he had started to enjoy this arrival experience in the station and tried to make it more comfortable for others. Jason was then asked how important he thought these first experiences were:

'I was kinda dreading it the first time but you get into it really quickly, everyone is really friendly and the focalisers⁵ help. I think it's a brave thing to do, not many people put themselves out of their comfort zone like that... it makes you feel good.'

(Jason, SFRP)

Jason mentions how the 'dread' he associated with the initial arrival anxiety can be replaced by a feeling of bravery and achievement through contact with others in the group, who are often in the same situation. Overcoming this perceived hurdle therefore strengthens the feeling of accomplishment that a volunteer can have during and following this initial contact. It is defeating this sense of being out of his comfort zone and then going on to have a positive experience that make him feel good. This is a feeling that a number of volunteers mentioned after going through a particularly hard time in their lives.

Erin found this experience of having to overcome her shyness, especially in arrival introductions, as useful for her:

'I had noticed that Erin was quite quiet within the group when we first met, although she was still talking to people. Later on at the first group sharing she got visibly nervous and upset when she was asked to introduce herself and why she was on the work-week.'

(SFRP field diary)

'I went through a bit of a tricky time a while before coming here and lost a lot of my confidence {voice breaks, short pause} but this has helped. Like I said, my dad told me about it, even just having to just do it...just go for it...and take the step has helped. I am more comfortable now than I was at the start of the week'

(Erin, SFRP)

⁵ SFRP use the term 'focaliser' to describe the team leaders that accompany the volunteers on a work-week. The term focaliser is used as the organisation did not like the idea of the group being 'led' and the power relations that this implies. Instead they wanted to present these individuals as being present to give the group advice and direction.

Erin, although having not vocalised in interview or to the group what she had went through in the recent past, found her volunteer experience helped her tackle the confidence problems that she was feeling. This was achieved through committing herself to meet and interact with new people, and dealing with the initial arrival was part of this process.

It can be smaller aspects of this experience that can also help to put a new volunteer at ease and can be the element of the meeting that they remember. Often it is these individual gestures or snippets of conversation that a volunteer remembers about their first meeting with other volunteers:

‘Alan’s beaming smile was the first thing I noticed. I thought I was going to be late and was rushing into the station but his friendly smile and hello was great.’

(Theresa, SFRP)

‘I think I’ll keep in touch with Theresa. She seemed quite tense when I first seen her but I remember her coming up to me and asking me where I’d got my scarf. That was nice. She’s moving down to where I live as well so I’ll maybe try to help her find her feet.’

(Sheena, SFRP)

The comments above illustrate two further points. The initial encounter can be reassuring and the first impression gained here can feed positively into rest of the experience and in the development of relationships and friendships. This perhaps shows a further benefit of return volunteering with the same individuals.

Although not for the same time-scale, the EEV arrival stories had similar sentiments to the ones described above. The EEV volunteers meet in a city centre square on the morning of a task day and the EEV minibus then takes them out to the task location when all the volunteers have arrived.

'I found him {a fellow volunteer} a bit abrasive when we first met but I learned that it is just the way he is. We laugh and joke about it now but I can see how new arrivals are sometimes a bit wary of him. It can take a while to get to know somebody and once you see how much work he puts in, especially at his age, you have to be impressed.'

(William, EEV)

In William's case, as he got to know and repeatedly go on tasks with another return volunteer he built a relationship that he would have found unlikely after their initial meeting, reinforcing the idea of the experience of the volunteering being enhanced through return volunteering with the same individuals. While focusing on the volunteer arrival stories in this section I will quote an excerpt from my research diary that helped me to understand some of the emotions and feeling that the volunteers described to me:

'I was feeling pretty anxious. My train had been cancelled and I had to ride a rail replacement bus to a station further down the line and then wait on the next train coming. I really did not want this on my first day with the group. I arrived at the meeting point, barely on time and no doubt looking a bit dishevelled. I see a group of people in khaki waterproofs and walking boots and think this must be the group. I walk over and ask if they are Eastern Environmental Volunteers, it turns out that they are in fact a walking group heading out for the day. This adds to my anxiety as I look around the square in hope for who I should be meeting. I spot the EEV minibus around the corner and mentally prepare myself for first contact. I recognise Christine who I had met previously and head over to her to say hi, I'm glad that I recognised someone. There are about ten people there and I get talking to a couple of them before heading onto the minibus. I could feel my angst wane slightly as I got into conversations on the bus on the way to the task location.'

(EEV field diary)

My own feelings of anxiety and angst were quickly softened once I arrived and got talking to the volunteers, and this seems to be true of many of the volunteer experiences as well. Alice describes similar feelings as we arrived at the task location. She had been a volunteer

with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers in the past and that was how she found out about EEV. She had not been out with any of the EEV members before and was a bit worried before coming along. She said that as soon as she realised that the volunteers were friendly and she got chatting with them that she felt comfortable. However, it is not always the case that volunteers equate their arrival with angst or anxiety. Having done similar environmental volunteer work in the past does seem to help with this:

‘Christine and I met each other when we did this kind of thing at university so maybe I’m biased! As much as we were maybe a little nervous we were looking to meet new people and keep on doing this type of work now we had moved up here. I was looking forward to getting to know people in the group. We got into it pretty quickly.’

(Evan, EEV)

Past experience and the company of his wife, Christine, put Evan more at ease with the initial arrival. As remarked by some of the volunteers that have been discussed previously, the importance of the initial sociability of the group and the acceptance offered by them is an important element of how the arrival experience is dealt with. The initial experiences of friendliness, followed by the satisfaction gained from what was perhaps viewed as a perceived risk, contribute to the largely positive reflections on the eventual outcomes of these meetings.

6.1.2 Arrival in the landscape

The second stage of the arrival story for the volunteers is when they arrive in the location or landscape of work. Although these responses are still highly based around the interactions between the volunteers themselves and their comments to each other, the importance of their surroundings and the landscape they find themselves in are centrally important. The multi-sensory and embodied experience of this arrival is also something

that, while spoken about in initial motivations to volunteer in these areas, often results in surprising sensations for those taking part for the first time.

On an SFRP introductory walk, on being introduced to the smell of a juniper bush Larry remarked:

'Wow... that has a strong smell. You know, it smells just like air freshener.'

(Larry, SFRP)

It is interesting to note that he associated the natural smell of the juniper, with the artificial scent of what he was more familiar with. It was almost a surprise to him that this smell actually did exist in such a setting. These realisations and moments of connection and elation often came up. When being introduced to a wood ants nest a number of sensations struck the volunteer:

'Derren had led the group over to the wood ants' nest that overlooked the flowing river. I had been here before and the location of the nest between stone, earth, water and an ancient Scots pine had always struck me. We could hardly hear Derren over the rush of the water so had to move in close to hear what he was saying. He asked Mhairi to run her hand over the nest with the bustling ants on top and then to smell her hand. I had seen this done before but unfortunately she put her hand too close and a few of the ants went in for a bite with their mandibles, quickly followed by a squirt of formic acid. With a yelp of surprise (and perhaps a little pain) the ants were eventually shaken off. When Mhairi did smell her hand she exclaimed that it smells just like salt and vinegar crisps. Derren explained that this was the formic acid that the ants fire as a form of defence... particularly unpleasant if the acid finds an open wound recently made by a bite!'

(SFRP field diary)

Figure 6.1: The wood ant hill beside the Scots pine tree.



Source: Author's photograph.

The ants nest in Figure 6.1 always provided a very embodied experience for the volunteer. The visual intrigue of the movement of the ants on the nest, the sound of the river, the surprise/shock of the ants' bite and the smell of the formic acid all provide a stimulus for wonder and learning. Combine this with the taste of the seasonal blaeberreries and cowberreries that cover the forest floor in this area and the sensory experience was complete. On the juniper bush mentioned previously, the berries could also be eaten:

Figure 6.2: Ripe juniper berries on the bush.



Source: Author's photograph.

'They're not very good, but you can taste the gin. Definitely better when fermented and mixed with tonic though!'

(Lois, SFRP)

These experiences are ones that the SFRP volunteers were initiated into during the first foray into the landscape, before even seeing their weekly accommodation. On the first work-week the focalisers explained that his helps to educate and inspire the volunteer, but also to bond the group before they travel to the accommodation. The sensory bombardment of sound, sight, touch, taste and smell are among the very first sensations encountered by the volunteers and a consistent theme throughout the rest of the work-week.

This landscape arrival was not confined to just SFRP, although it might be more deliberately invoked by the group focalisers here than in the other case study groups. Even within the urban green space groups, there were moments of landscape arrival that could come across as surprising to the individual. The local environments of the other groups also provide moments of realisation to the other volunteers.

'You just don't realise this is here do you? We've just drove 25 minutes out of town and I can't hear one car or see any houses. Look at that view {looking down the valley and spreading her arms}.'

(Alice, EEV)

'I wouldn't say I was nervous, but it's the same as anything else, you're doing a new thing and you're not so sure. It was a great morning though {of his first volunteer day} and there was a light mist about the place that just gave the park this fairytale look, I certainly wouldn't normally be up and about at that time in the morning but I'm glad I was that Sunday.'

(Hannah, FSP)

The accounts above show elements of discovery in two different ways. Alice, although not travelling far from her home, was realising that there is a whole undiscovered place for her to explore. It is the space itself that she was discovering and her arm gesture is suggesting the vastness that was presented before her. In Hannah's case, it was not the space that she was discovering on her arrival to volunteer, but the changes to this space through the time of day and the season. When Hannah discussed this further she revealed that she would normally walk her dogs after work during the week but she valued her encounter on that autumn morning so much on her first volunteer day that she now makes a point of walking her dogs before going to work, something that she insists 'has helped my thinking'. Even in this familiar landscape she had found something that made her feel like she was seeing the space in a different way. These discoveries of new spaces and landscapes and new ways of experiencing a familiar landscape led to the most common first experience with those first time volunteers. These shared first experiences in the landscape could also help to bond the group socially.

'We had all just got to the area and were sitting down around a rock pool. I had felt the group had been quiet until then, and because it was a small group it made things seem a little stifled. It was Linda who first noticed them, two newts coming up to the surface of the water to investigate the movement that was going on above their watery world. The conversation then started. 'What do they eat?', 'Can they breathe under water?', 'There's another one!' I felt that it was after this point that people really started to bond.'

(SFRP field diary)

This shared experience was something on arrival in a landscape that helped bond the group in both the immediate and long-term timescales. The silences as this group first met were more of an awkward social nature, but there were numerous occasions when moments of silence suggested something quite different.

The sense of silence and contemplation was something that the volunteers commonly vocalised but can also be observed quite noticeably. Groups could frequently be observed, on their first view down a glen or across a loch, standing together and gazing at the same spot, often in silence.

Figure 6.3: Volunteers arriving in the location and having lunch while gazing out at the surrounding landscape. This represents a time of solitary reflection within a group setting.



Source: Author's photograph.

These silent moments could be seen as both an individual and solitary experience but one that volunteers could use to relate to, and with, each other afterwards. These moments were not awkward, but pensive, and reflect on the idea of 'stillness' (Conradson, 2007). This idea is continued in Section 6.2 that considers how volunteers like to work when carrying out a task.

The arrival to do a task within an individual's own community can also bring them to regard the area in a new light. Delia explained this in comparison to learning how to play a musical instrument:

'It is like learning how to play the piano. Before, you enjoyed the music but you didn't really appreciate all the work that went into it. It was like that when I first came along and

saw the other volunteers clearing the paths and digging drainage ditches. It hit home that this doesn't just magically happen. That was my first impression.'

(Delia, CEG)

Similar to what Hannah expressed about seeing a familiar area differently on arrival to volunteer, this was also the case for Delia. She now finds it hard to 'switch off' when she is going through the area and views it in a different way, suddenly seeing areas that need cleaned up or trees that require pruning back. She is therefore interpreting the landscape differently from the way she did when she first started volunteering. This realisation from her first arrival has therefore flowed through her future volunteering and also her wider enjoyment and engagement with the park.

6.1.3 Arrival summary

The arrival of volunteers at a meeting point often produced feelings and encounters that could shape the rest of the volunteer experience and build confidence. These arrival stories illustrate the step taken from signing up to a work-week or deciding to go along to a community clean-up, to actually turning up and meeting new people and encountering a new landscape or a known landscape in a new way. For some, this moment was characterised by anxiety, but this can be an emotion that is very rewarding to overcome. For others, the excitement and expectation of meeting new people overrides such worries. The ability to share these common feelings was something that can bond the group. It is in this space that the seeds of longer lasting friendships can be sown.

When arriving and first experiencing the landscape, a number of emotions are expressed. Volunteers often experienced moments of silence and contemplation when viewing an impressive vista. This may take place in a solitary fashion or as part of a shared group

appreciation. In other cases, a familiar area can be transformed and re-discovered through the time or season of the volunteer work. This transformation of a space may also take place due to a realisation of the work that goes into up keeping and maintaining a certain area, even if the new volunteer had experienced that area in a different context many times before. The theme of embodiment and the multi-sensory experiences that volunteers encounter in their first foray into the landscape feature strongly in memory accounts of the volunteering. This firmly links in to the importance of 'being somewhere' (Kearns and Andrews, 2010) and the feeling that volunteers begin to make sense of the landscape through these embodied encounters (Wylie, 2007). This may be related to the landscape, such as the activity around the ant hill, but it may also be more social and based around the contact with other volunteers (Edensor, 2000). These emotions open up the way that an individual then goes on to approach their volunteering. This raises questions as to how volunteers will move on from these arrival experiences and interact and treat their future volunteering activity. Questions develop around how a volunteer then proceeds, in other words, how they go about doing the volunteering. This is something that will become clearer and more apparent in Sections 6.2 and 6.3 that explore the tasks that the volunteers take part in and the landscapes in which this takes place. This will explore the doings, practices, feelings and everyday interactions of volunteering (Jupp, 2008) and go towards giving a more lively and creative account of the volunteering experiences (Conradson, 2003). As well as the practical aspects of the volunteering, these aspects will also be considered in terms of what the volunteering means to the individuals taking part. It is these physical tasks, as well as the more process-laden committee meetings and fundraising, that will be examined now. Drawing on the in-depth interviews and using the ideas that were circulated in the focus groups, as well as the research diary observations, the emotional well-being impacts from the specific types of task conducted and the ways of going about these tasks will be investigated.

6.2 The importance of task

The range of activities that environmental volunteering groups cover has been touched upon in previous chapters. These activities, with the majority still covering the original criteria of active volunteering in green spaces, comprise a wide variety of tasks in the way they are conducted and the type of physical and emotional engagement that they involve. These tasks will be considered in terms of the way that volunteers interact and the types of well-being that volunteers feel they encourage. Initially, the tasks will be described in terms of what they involve. This will be split into group (Section 6.2.1) and individual (Section 6.2.2) tasks, with a brief description given to each. This will also involve looking at the volunteer experiences of committee meetings and fundraising. Although not part of the original consideration, a number of the groups found these tasks to be essential in conducting the volunteer work and in both the running and organisation of the group's goals and activities. This will be followed by sections (6.2.3 to 6.2.8) exploring the multiple meanings that can be ascribed to the carrying out of the tasks and looking at how these can influence a diverse range of impacts on individual well-being. The different tasks will be described to understand the way in which they were conducted and in the following section the overarching themes that link these different ways and types of working will be explored.

6.2.1 *Group tasks*

The following tasks all involved an aspect of cooperation and teamwork. This was often heralded by the volunteers and organisers as being particularly important for group bonding, as well as providing social interaction during task. Table 6.1 summarises these tasks and the fuller descriptions follow the table.

Table 6.1: Summary of group tasks

Task	Characteristics	Main groups involved
Fence removal	Requires specialist equipment and a high level of group communication.	SFRP, EEV
Tree felling	Generally carried out in pairs using handsaws and loppers on small (under two metres) to medium (two to seven metre) height trees.	SFRP, EEV, CEG, FSP
Rhododendron removal	This requires a number of teams working on different stages of the removal.	SFRP, EEV, FSP
Drainage ditching	This needs previous planning and a number of individuals using spades.	SFRP, FSP
Nursery tree removal	This is a task carried out in pairs, involving tree removal, and preparation for storage and re-planting.	SFRP
Committee meetings	These involve regular meetings to discuss the running of the group.	FSP, CEG, EEV, SFRP, NSA
Fundraising	This is carried out in varying scales and varying ways across the groups.	FSP, CEG, EEV, SFRP, NSA

a) Fence removal

This was one of the most complex tasks in terms of team working. This task was conducted both by SFRP and EEV. This was often included in an SFRP work-week, over perhaps one or two days. EEV would remove redundant deer fencing for landowners when requested to do so. Due to the nature of fence removal, the skills and tools needed, and the

physicality and destructive nature of the task, many volunteers vocalised their enjoyment for this particular job. In all the cases that the case study work was conducted, it was deer fences that were being removed. This involved a number of stages. Firstly, the tension wire had to be safely cut. The fencing was split into two layers, top and bottom. The top layer had to be removed first and the second layer removed after this. These were then rolled up and stored for collection. Finally, the wooden posts had to be removed from the ground and set into habitat piles (areas where animals and insects can make their home amongst decomposing wood piles). This process meant that volunteers often had to work in pairs and coordinate the task so that everything was being completed in the correct order. This resulted in a necessitation for high levels of communication and teamwork. As can be seen from Figure 5, safety gloves, goggles and hats were also worn:

Figure 6.4: Volunteers removing the top wire layer of the deer fence.



Source: Author's photograph.

In Figure 6.5, below, this organised team work can be seen. The volunteers in the foreground are removing staples from the posts so that the volunteers in the distance can begin to then roll up the wire sections. The tension wire here is already being rolled up by

the volunteer in the centre of the picture. There has to be constant communication down the line of volunteers so that each stage of the fence removal can be completed in the correct order. Communication is also needed to warn others of a tension wire being cut or a post being removed in another volunteer's vicinity.

Figure 6.5: The spread of team work during deer fence removal.



Source: Author's photograph.

The valued aspects of physicality and team work were the strongest points that came from volunteers when they explained how they felt about these tasks and it is these aspects that will be touched upon in the next sections.

b) Tree felling

There were two forms of tree removal that all of the groups conducted in different shapes or forms. The first was 'tree thinning'. This was required when space became overcrowded and trees had to be removed to give others the opportunity to grow. The second was non-native tree removal. This was predominantly carried out by SFRP, which had non-native

species removal in Scotland at the centre of their ethos and objectives. CEG, FSP and EEV also carried out this task to a lesser extent in some small native woodland areas or within urban parks. To perform the task volunteers usually worked in pairs and use branch loppers and handsaws to fell the tree. Trees from as young as a few years that could be pulled out the ground, whereas trees aged up to 25 years were felled with the handsaws. This had to be done safely and correctly and to a particular plan that was set out at the beginning of the task by the leaders. As will be described below, volunteers had a range of feelings about this particular task and its physical, social and emotional aspects.

Figure 6.6: Non-native sitka spruce tree felling in Glen Moriston.



Source: Author's photograph.

c) Rhododendron removal

Also known to the volunteers as ‘rhodie bashing’, this very intrusive non-native shrub can outcompete native species and spread very quickly. Although being seen as a decorative shrub, the rhododendrons that were removed would often reach a number of metres in height and have extremely thick and tough trunks and branches. The rhododendron trunks,

branches and leaves have to be removed and then piled on a raised area or on a plastic sheet away from the soil as roots can take hold again – even from the felled material. Often once the rhododendron has been sawn down to the stump by volunteers, this is followed up by chemical treatment from the Forestry Commission or other landowner to try and kill the plant. This is a very physical and cooperative task. Often a group of six to ten volunteers can all be working in the same area, some felling, some transporting and others piling the rhododendron. This created a very visual difference at the end of the volunteer day:

‘The piles could be seen along the line of work for about 200 metres. Trees and burns that were previously not visible could now be seen again. The cleared areas were huge and a couple for the volunteers commented on how much work they had managed to get through.’

(SFRP field diary)

Figure 6.7: ‘Rhodie bashing’ in practice.



Source: Author’s photograph.

d) Drainage ditching

This was carried out by FSP around the park area walkways and paths. Often paths would become waterlogged and almost impossible to pass so ditches would be burrowed out to release the water away from these sections. Normally this would take a couple of volunteers to plan the best way to carry out the task and then shovel and shape the relief ditch. This was a task that would need to be reviewed and maintained, with the aim of providing access through the area. This task was often involved very wet, dirty and strenuous work, depending on the area that required clearing. Figure 6.8 show three FSP volunteers working together to clear leaves from a path and digging a relief ditch to take water downhill. This photo was taken on a cold day, but the layers of clothing that have been removed and hung up by the volunteers are testament to the physicality of the task.

Figure 6.8: Path clearing and drainage ditching by FSP volunteers.



Source: Author's photograph.

e) Nursery tree removal

SFRP grew many of their native trees in a nursery until they were ready to be planted in the glens after around two years. By this time the tree would have reached around 20-30cm in height and was ready for removal. In pairs, volunteers would dig out the tree with the roots intact and place them into bags, sometimes to be taken straight out onto the hill and sometimes for the roots to be protectively treated. This type of removal was more like gardening as it was particularly important to be careful with the trees and make sure they were in an optimum condition to be replanted. The leisurely nature of this task meant there were a lot of opportunities for the volunteers to have conversations, both around the task at hand but also involving more social and fun interaction. Figure 6.9, taken by Peter as part of the participant photography, shows the researcher and another volunteer removing and bagging loose root trees. These were then taken for the roots to be treated and stored before they could be planted out on the hillside.

Figure 6.9: Bird cherry tree being removed from the nursery beds.



Source: Photograph taken by Peter, SFRP.

f) Committee meetings and fundraising

In this section the committee meetings of both CEG and FSP will be explored (SFRP and EEV also had committee meetings but these were not attended by the researcher). Both these groups hold monthly meetings to discuss activities and funding issues. The CEG committee consists of ten people and a part-time paid coordinator. The FSP committee are of a similar size and there is normally a local council representative at the meetings as well. Although not in the original remit for inclusion in this study, to understand the work that goes in with these groups it was important to understand how the ideas are formed and tasks carried out. This group work is not part of the practical 'nature work' that has been outlined above, but emerged as important to the volunteers that took part in this. These meetings could outline the future of the group, while at the same time, developing and making use of volunteers' skills that would not be utilised in the practical nature tasks. Therefore, it is useful to understand the attitude and affects that the committee meeting participation has on those volunteers who take part most often.

Barbara and George of FSP take the lead within the group for the majority of the paperwork. George takes and distributes the minutes of the meetings and Barbara takes the lead in the majority of the fundraising. George, although beginning to compile the minutes out of necessity for the group, now finds it rewarding to do so.

'doing the minutes was a chore at the beginning, but I'm getting better at it so I...I get a sense of achievement out of doing minutes...I get a kick out of doing it well, or I think, well anyway...as long as I think it's good, I get a kick out of it.'

(George, FSP)

The skills that he can apply to his volunteering that he has attained through his work have been put to use and helped him build a skills base of writing and wording on top of this.

Barbara handled the process of funding applications, often a very long and paper intensive process that had both positive and negative aspects. In the quote below she is talking about her experiences with the biggest and most intensive funding application that the group has applied for:

'This has been the biggest probably input (the funding application) that I've had to put in at all, and I would say that in this...And while I had read through the guidance, I don't think I had quite appreciated how much time it was going to consume, so it has been...I've found it quite difficult at times with this one because there's been so much...there's days worth of it, that've been put in, just days worth. And it's like, because of the stages, there's days and then stop, and then days. So I think the frustrating thing with this one perhaps to a degree that annoys you, is if you can't do it yourself, but when you're relying on others to come back to you that's really hard, and you're like 'argh!' But you have to wait...I'm not the most patient perhaps, with those things. So this one is an eye-opener, so I'm certainly going to sit for a wee while after this one and say 'NO MORE!!' For a little while at least, who knows how long that will last I don't know, right enough (laughter). This one, however stressful and time consuming, is also quite exciting because of the stages we find it just, just quite a buzz coming from the different stages...when you get told you're going through to the next bit, you know, it's quite 'ooooooh' you get quite a buzz.'

(Barbara, FSP)

Barbara is describing the highs and lows of the application process and the frustrations she encounters with the process. Since the interview the group were awarded the funding application for £70,000, by far the highest amount of funding they had received. Although going through periods of waiting and having to fulfil criteria at every step, the 'buzz' that Barbara and the rest of the group gained from this achievement has encouraged them onto other large projects and they are currently involved in another sizeable application. It seems that if a group gains success and retains an optimistic outlook then this has snowball effects on both future applications and also wider activities. On the other hand, Barbara remarked that if the applications had been ultimately unsuccessful it may have left her and

the others feeling ‘a bit dejected’. Hannah, the former chairperson of FSP, remarked that it makes the meetings and effort ‘worth it in the end, for everyone involved, when there is an end product’.

The experience of CEG was similar to that of FSP in the optimistic and positive way that tasks are organised and funding obtained. CEG had been in existence for over ten years and received 3-yearly funding from Scottish Natural Heritage as well as other funding bodies. The part-time paid employee, Anita, had a lot of experience with applications and drives the group forward and takes the majority of responsibility here. The committee meetings were probably the most distinctive aspect of this group. This was the forum in which ideas are aired to what tasks the group will be conducting and feedback was also provided from the various affiliated groups that have been discussed previously. There were always a range of different activities planned at the same time and members of the committee were very active in researching and following up ideas and interests. This had provided them, personally, with a number of skills:

‘I think I’ve totally changed, being involved in a conservation group that way, from being really quite, you know, thinking I’m right, you’re wrong, now I listen more.’

(Irvine, CEG)

Irvine was a passionate bird lover and conservationist who had been involved with CEG for six years. Through both his group committee work and the links that he has had to build through the community he says that he had ‘become more understanding’ of other peoples views. Another committee member, Corinna, had also benefited from these meetings:

'I feel as if I know a lot more about the area now, I feel more part of it. As you know, I am from down south and it took me a while to get settled here. Getting involved with CEG was a big part of that. I've made a lot of friends through here I feel I know how things ...work'

(Corinna, CEG)

This feeling of involvement, making friends and becoming part of the community is something that will be discussed in the following community and social networks chapter. It is important to note here, however, that these feelings are bred through the skills, friendships and contacts made within the committee meetings and fundraising activities as well as the actual active environmental volunteering tasks. Although not being a task that is conducted in natural surroundings, the committee meetings and fundraising are still central to the 'nature work' that the groups take part in.

6.2.2 Individual tasks

These are the tasks that are completed by volunteers on an individual basis, without the need to expressly be working in pairs or groups. This section will discuss the practicalities of what these tasks involve. Table 6.2 summarises these individual tasks:

Table 6.2: Summary of individual tasks

Task	Characteristics	Main groups involved
Tree planting	This requires the planting of plugs*, loose root trees and seeds.	SFRP, EEV, CEG
Seed collection	Individual tree seeds are collected and bagged, ready for planting at another location.	SFRP, EEV
Juniper seed release	An intricate task undertaken indoors, releasing seeds within juniper berries for planting.	SFRP
Gardening	Involves the planting and upkeep of flower or vegetable beds.	CEG, FSP, NSA
Litter picking	Undertaken regularly to keep an area clean.	CEG, FSP, NSA
Graffiti removal	Undertaken regularly, often using specialist cleaning kits.	CEG, FSP, NSA

*Plugs are young trees with compacted soil around the roots.

a) Tree planting

Beginning with this task is appropriate as it was one of the most common, yet complex, tasks within the groups. This was the central task of SFRP but was also carried out often on work days and weekend by EEV. CEG also carried out orchard tree planting and oak tree planting in a community green space. Generally this is a task that one person can do alone as the planting tends to be of two to three year old trees that come in plugs of thirty that can be easily planted by one person. There are rare occasions when the planting involved older trees with 'loose' roots and this often involves two people working together. Across

the groups, the trees that were planted were always native Scottish species. These included Scots pine, birch, willow, aspen, oak, juniper, holly, hazel, alder and rowan. When trying to re-establish a native forest the Scots pine is the first to be planted, followed by other species. The trees are the first aspect to be reintroduced and this begins the process of other plant, and finally, in SFRP's aims, animal reintroduction. Tree planting is, therefore, the beginning of a vision that may take hundreds of years. It is apparent from these overlapping aspects and aims that this particular task can link into a range of motivations and aspects of well-being. Figure 6.10 shows a Scots pine tree being planted. The tree is being tested with a short pull upwards to check that it is planted securely and cannot easily be uprooted by a grazing deer.

Figure 6.10: A young Scots pine after being planted.



Source: Author's photograph.

b) Seed collection

SFRP and EEV took part in two types of seed collection; juniper berry picking and acorn collection. Many juniper berries can be collected from a single bush at once and can be completed in a very short space of time. This is the start of two to three years of work.

Once the berries are picked, the seeds must be released, planted and grown in a nursery until sufficiently old. Finally these are planted in a selected spot. Volunteers were involved in every stage of this process. The acorn (seed of the oak tree) collection involves covering a larger area, collecting fallen acorns that are found underneath oak trees. These would be preferably intact and only in the very early stages of sprouting, if at all. There is, consequently a vetoing process involved when considering what acorns to keep. Again, these will be planted and grown in a nursery.

c) Juniper seed release

Once the berries are collected the seeds must be extracted from the berries to prepare them for planting (around four seeds to each berry). This was carried out by a few SFRP members. This was an extremely intricate and repetitive task but one that a number of volunteers found rewarding, especially those volunteers who felt they could not participate as fully in the more physically demanding tasks.

d) Gardening

CEG, FSP and NSA carried out areas of flower and vegetable gardening. NSA used these skills to build and plant vegetable beds, while FSP and NSA planted and tended wildflower meadows or flower beds. East-coast Exotic Gardeners⁶ at the botanic gardens were where gardening framed the majority of what they did. Although not providing enough material to frame as a case study group, some of this gardening evidence (field diary and discussions with volunteers) will be used in this chapter. These volunteers tended to have gardening skills already and would bring them to their volunteer work. Often this would

⁶ East-coast Exotic Gardeners were a botanic gardens group where some participant observation days were carried out. However, the range of material collected was not substantial enough to form another case study group.

involve tasks such as weeding and planting, under the (highly informal) guidance of a botanic gardens employee. Sections were done individually, but in a close proximity to other volunteers which encouraged almost constant conversation and discussion about the task and other wider issues among the volunteers.

e) Litter picking

This was a task carried out by CEG, FSP and NSA. The last were a very new group who were specifically clearing up an area of land to make it more presentable and therefore seemed to take more satisfaction from the task. CEG and FSP would hold volunteer days of litter picking on occasion. Although not a particularly favoured task, the volunteers did seem to appreciate that it was necessary and this necessitated litter picking to be carried out on a regular basis.

f) Graffiti removal

Again, CEG, FSP and NSA removed graffiti from local areas and the local park. This would involve removing spray painted messages from benches, signage, trees and buildings. FSP had specialist kits for this that were provided by the local council. Although an on-going task that would have to be repeated over time, creating some frustration, volunteers engaged in this task would still express satisfaction when graffiti was removed. Figure 6:11 shows a bench that is covered in graffiti about to be removed and painted over by a volunteer.

Figure 6.11: Graffiti removal and painting about to commence in Southside Park.



Source: Author's photograph.

g) 'Satellite' volunteering

This term is not a task but is rather used to describe volunteers who are affiliated with a particular group but conduct their own volunteer work. This was carried out separately from specified volunteer event times. A number of tasks can be carried out in this way, as long as they involve solitary volunteering that goes beyond the time commitments that the volunteer gives to solely group work. This was a more informal way to conduct their volunteering, away from the direct supervision or guidance given on organised task days.

The individual and group tasks have been briefly described above so that a more fluid understanding of the emotions and feelings that these tasks provide can be understood. Through the volunteer interviews, focus groups and ethnographic field-notes, the predominant themes that emerged will be discussed below with a view to explore the multiple meanings given to these practical tasks.

6.2.3 *Mind placement on task*

The term ‘mind placement’ is being used here to describe the thoughts and feelings that the volunteer is encountering while they are out on task. Volunteers were asked about their thoughts while they are involved in carrying out tasks. Responses were varied but a number of themes began to emerge. The first of these is a deep involvement in the task – the idea of getting ‘lost’ in what they are doing. This would describe a disconnection with the immediate environment, either the removal of the mind from the exact task that the body is undertaking or a deep connection with that task. This resonates with the idea of ‘flow’ (Csíkszentmihályi, 1990) where an individual becomes completely immersed in the task that they are performing. This can manifest itself in a feeling of joy and achievement. As will be explored here, this feeling can be achieved through a high degree of concentration on a set of goals and a merging of physical action and awareness. There was the sense from some of the volunteers that this feeling of flow was one of the main attractions of the volunteering and was often helped by tasks that were repetitive:

‘It does need some concentration (tree planting) but once you get the hang of it, it can be quite repetitive... but not in a bad way. I just get into it and clear my thoughts, yeah, clarity, that’s it.’

(Sheena, SFRP)

‘Um, I’m usually quite...I’m quite caught up in the task, I would say, what I’m doing. Although I’m thinking about the bigger picture of how it will enhance the environment, you know. I’m kind of like ‘oh this’ll look good later’ or ‘I’ll be able to walk this way due to there not being filthy’ or...you know, so I do think about what its going to achieve, you know, what the end result will be. But I’m probably pretty focused on doing what I’m doing.’

(Barbara, FSP)

This 'clarity' or clearing of thoughts was expressed as having a number of beneficial effects including relaxation and confidence building:

'Yeah usually our days in work are like 50 hours long... and these are like 10 minutes. Just turn around and like 3 hours have gone, and you think, where the bloody hell has that gone?'

(Rhona, SFRP)

'When you're seeding the juniper berries, it is a really finicky job 'cause they're so small but it means you have to concentrate. I'm not so good at big physical tasks but with that I can just get on with it on my own and get lost in it... I can spend hours doing it and just relax myself.'

(Janet, SFRP)

'I do like it when I'm confident in doing something and can just get it done. I feel like that now, I used to worry about if I was doing stuff right but now I've been at it a while I can just get on with the work. It's definitely helped me and I look forward to Sundays now to unwind and not think about work the next day. I used to hate Sundays!'

(Christine, EEV)

This idea of time passing by quickly without worry and totally immersed in the job at hand was shared by a number of volunteers across the groups, as illustrated above, but for others time involved in a task gave space for outside thoughts. Again, these thoughts are encouraged by, but removed from, the task that is being carried out. Often these thoughts would manifest themselves through time spent on reflection or working through issues going on in a volunteer's outside life:

'I've found myself, it's funny I was talking about this today, I've found myself today because we were planting trees, reflecting on the tree-planting aspect, the fact that my father passed away and I thought about my father a few times today but I try not to get too

hung up on that because it was quite a painful experience at the time when it happened, we were very close so you can dwell on something too much, too long.'

(John, SFRP)

'Interviewer – mmm. This might sound unusual, did you think about anything in particular when you were doing the planting or were you focussed on the task?

Rhona – No, no, I came for a particular reason to do it. I've got a friend who would have been fifty on Wednesday but he killed himself before he was, just before his fortieth.

I – Right

R – So it was kind of, it's kind of again, a bit maudlin round about now. So I kind of thought I'll go up and do some trees, so I've named them all after him. All my trees are called John.

I – So did you do that, did you just do that in your head?

R – Yeah, I mean I didn't realise they did memorial ones but I thought oh, I'll go up and do them.'

(Rhona, SFRP)

'I try to focus on what I'm doing and on the landscape around me and not think so much about other things but I always end up thinking about everything else, I can't help it, I kind of go into my own little world a bit to be honest. I'm too much of a deep thinker, I just spend so much time thinking....I do go off into my own little world, which is sometimes good when I'm in a happy mood, but if I'm not then it can kind of not be a good thing.'

(Erin, SFRP)

The quotations above from Rhona, John and Erin were all expressed about tree planting. The connection between tree planting and thinking about loved ones, especially those who have died, came through strongly. SFRP themselves often planted memorial groves where people donated money online and trees were planted in the honour of the person requested

(as mentioned at the end of Rhona's quotation). In many other cases volunteers planted in memory of friends and family. For some, this was pre-planned and one of the motivations to get involved in that particular aspect of environmental volunteering, but for others this was something that only occurred to them to do when they were out planting. This links in with ideas of 'memorialisation' (Withers, 2005). This is the idea of being able to secure the past and the present in a way that is significant to the individual, a representation in space that commemorates back over time. This practice was often nurtured by a particular group's approach to tree planting and ideas of care and nurture for the tree itself, lending itself to thoughts of emotional connections in not only the task that was being performed, but also those in wider life. As is illustrated by the quotes, however, this can have the effect of producing strong, and sometimes upsetting, memories of an individual's past. In the quotation below, Ken compares that feeling to how he felt when he attended a silent meditation retreat:

'It was physically demanding. I actually felt really strong, physical pain in my back and legs at that retreat. I was really close to quitting. The retreat leader told me this was just my emotional pain coming out and showing itself in a physical way – I had to get through the thoughts of the bad to get to the good feeling. I felt the same when I was out here, so much time to think always will bring up bad stuff but once you get through thinking about that then you can be at peace.'

(Ken, SFRP)

This is reinforcing the link between physical and emotional well-being and how the act of individual environmental volunteering tasks can bring these feelings quite strongly to a volunteer's mind. As well as these aspects of either being fully immersed in the task and the idea of thinking about an emotional attachment to the volunteer's outside life, participants also mentioned the enjoyment they gained from the social aspect of doing some tasks:

'Yes, yes it's better fun to do it with a big group of people; I think its more, kind of, motivating and enjoyable when there's other people. I don't mind doing, you know, the likes of graffiti, I don't mind doing that on my own, 'cause that's like something that you just want to clean up and get it done, it's a job that needs done so I'm just as happy to do that on my own. But other things, where we're doing lots of things together, like planting bulbs, are more enjoyable in a group, that's when they're fun.'

(Barbara, FSP)

'On the whole I think I like to be closer to other people, yeah, even if we're not talking. We were having a sing on the hill earlier on. I sometimes work with earphones on and start singing along – today a few people just started joining in!'

(Karen, SFRP)

'Obviously we have social events and some of us see each other quite a lot, not just when we're with EEV. But when we're working away as well, it's nice to have a chat... about whatever... what we're doing, the weather, anything. It makes it more enjoyable.'

(Evan, EEV)

In group tasks there was a practical need for volunteers to talk and communicate to get the job done but in the instances above the volunteers highlight the pleasure they get from having other volunteers working in close proximity and being able to have someone to talk to. This was often highlighted as one of the main reasons to return with the same group – the camaraderie that is built through these exchanges and the fun they had while working. These opportunities for being together and being alone were central to the balance of the volunteer work. Volunteers, as illustrated above, value aspects of both. This can be in terms of taking time to be pensive and still, but also of sharing experiences and having fun. This sharing of experiences is taken to further levels by organised social activity and group events. These will be discussed in Chapter 7 on social networks and community linkages related to the groups.

6.2.4 'Destructivism' and cathartic release

This idea of cathartic release is one that has long been recognised in psychological disciplines, although it has come under critique in the past ten years (Bushman *et al.*, 1999; Guerin, 2001). This is the idea that an aggressive and embodied physical release can be beneficial to an individual's emotional well being. The term 'destructivism' is used here to describe how the volunteers view some of the tasks, especially those of tree felling and fence removal. There is not a direct correlation with cathartic release, as this is strictly the way in which physical aggression is used to relieve feelings of anger. Instead, destructivism is more concerned with the enjoyment individuals may or may not attain from this element of the tasks and how they are performed.

'I quite like, I love the planting but I can only do a couple of days of it before I start to get bored. I really enjoy the kinda, sounds a bit dodgy, but I like the destructive side of it. I really enjoy taking out fences and I really enjoy felling and quite often those are more like group activities, like when you're doing planting it's very solitary a lot of the time.'

(Danielle, SFRP)

'And that part of its really good as well because I work in IT so I just sit behind a desk all day and use my head or my brain, well try to anyway. And you know it can be quite tiring in some respects, it's quite wearing after a while so coming out and not having to think too much but you know but bashing all that energy, that surplus energy out of you so it's really good.'

(Jason, SFRP)

'I did enjoy pulling out those posts. It was great to just throw them around and heave them out the ground. It was like a personal challenge and the satisfaction of hearing that 'splurrrge' as them came out was fantastic'

(Tam, EEV)

The language used by the volunteers in the above quotations shows some of the elements of cathartic release they get from the tasks. The challenge of the physicality and the use of exertion to get the job done, while using physical means, was a strong part of this sensation. Brenda, in the following two quotations, shows some of the concerns that volunteers aired about tree felling. As much as she, and others, were aware that this was a necessary task for managing and preserving woodland areas, they still did not like the idea of removing and cutting down trees:

'I like to, the sort of semi-destructive element of the, the felling or the removing you know, like we were doing today, pulling them out by their ears it's erm... something at first I found difficult I thought you know, I don't like destruction and that kind of thing but sometimes it's necessary.'

(Brenda, SFRP)

'I do talk to the trees sometimes and tell them, I'm sorry to be pulling you out but you don't belong here (chuckles) these other little ones have more need (laughs).'

(Brenda, SFRP)

These negative feelings of doubt that some volunteers experienced were partly allayed by what Brenda described as them 'not belonging' in that area. This is returning to the notion of native and non-native plant species mentioned earlier. There is a very spatial element of certain plant (in this case tree) species not belonging to certain areas and being viewed as 'alien' or 'invader' species that then justified their removal (rhododendron was very much included as one of these). There were also a number of volunteers who did not always like the destructive expression of others. On a number of occasions volunteers quietly criticised others for 'trying to do too much' (Sheena, SFRP). This often involved them observing other volunteers trying to pull out a fence post that seemed too big for them, or felling a tree that was too tall. This was linked to the nature of 'competitive boys' by two of the

female volunteers on one EEV task day. They were relating this need for physical shows of exertion (by the two male volunteers in question) with the need to outdo each other. Therefore, these ideas of destructivism and cathartic release were not always viewed positively by all volunteers.

6.2.5 Reenergising and recharging

Although not necessarily being used as a way to ‘find’ well-being, a number of volunteers viewed the tasks as a way to recharge how they are feeling. This is to be compared to the desire (in Section 6.2.3) of being ‘lost’ in the task. Instead of the task encouraging moments of stillness and a clearing of thoughts, some volunteers treated their volunteering as a way to rediscover a feeling of control. One even describes it as a craving to get away (a need) that if not fulfilled would result in a ‘breakdown’:

‘I have kinda found that I’ve been thinking about things that I haven’t thought about for a long time or people I haven’t spoken to for a while and I’ve kind of thought things through. So it’s been like anything, like a silly repetitive task, your mind kind of wanders off, and it’s quite...I mean, the tree planting is less team work, I mean its very much you work on your own til lunch time and then you sit and chat or sit and look at the scenery. Whereas the fence building was very much working as a unit, everyone had their own little task and we swapped over and stuff. It helps to keep me going.’

(Graham, SFRP)

‘I do enjoy going away on the residential (weekends). It’s with friends and it gives you that bit longer to chill out, and it gives me something to look forward to. I feel as if it’s important to keep me ticking over and not, you know... throwing the computer out the window at work (laughs). Seriously though, it recharges my batteries.’

(Iain, EEV)

'If I haven't been out on task in a while and just at work I get a little bit grumpy. I need my weekly or fortnightly fix or I feel like I'll have a breakdown. Even just the litter-picking helps, I still get out there and have a good time. If there isn't an event organised I'll just get out there and do it myself, I'm easy.'

(Derek, NSA and SFRP)

Derek touches on the idea that he feels he needs volunteering to break up his usual work life. He either does this as part of the group or he conducts his own satellite volunteering. As he mentions, this doesn't always have to be a particularly large task but could even be 'just litter picking'. Whichever way the task is carried out, it helps him to prepare himself and get through what he described previously in an SFRP focus group as a 'stressful numbers job that pays well in money but not in satisfaction'. This links in with the idea that volunteering in the natural outdoors can be used as a 'safety valve' (Warren, 2002, 229). This indicates that individuals knowingly use their volunteering to affect their emotional well-being. Part of this ability to release comes from physically being in the landscape and being involved bodily in the task.

6.2.6 Embodiment

The multi-sensory embodiment of the arrival encounters in the landscape has already been discussed. The smell of the pine trees, the juniper and the ants' formic acid, the sound of the rushing river, the taste of blueberries and juniper berries and the various touches and encounters with the ground and vegetation. These are all experiences that the SFRP volunteers come across before their first tasks. This will be expanded upon here through the experiences of tasks and an awareness of body within the volunteers. A number of volunteers spoke about the physicality of the tasks, the tiring nature of how they use their bodies. This was often explained as having satisfying and beneficial effects:

'SFRP for one thing, helped me get over insomnia that I had before, quite chronic insomnia and for years I'd not be able to sleep properly and sometimes I'd only sleep every second night and coming here, I got into this routine, getting up at the same time, go out and then knacker myself. You know, you go out on a cold day, lugging trees all day and digging, and you come back and you feel like you have used your body and you get the best sleep ever, and yeah, you do feel your fitness increase over the time of doing it.'

(Danielle, SFRP)

'I felt like I've actually done something with my day and I've got outside and I feel like I'm sleeping better probably. Well I feel more tired anyway (laughs)... it's probably doing me a lot of good. And I did find it a bit tiring yesterday for some reason but it's still really rewarding I think. I just like being outdoors.'

(Erin, SFRP)

'Graham – It was proper physical {the task of fence removal}'

Interviewer – Yeah. I mean do you...

G – And I like that; I really enjoyed that bit of it. That's the easy bit. Using muscles that I haven't used for a long time. I guess I would say that I enjoyed the fence removal more, as a task, but if that's all I did all week, I'd feel that I hadn't got out of the week what I wanted which was to go plant some trees.'

(Graham, SFRP)

Edensor (2000) highlighted the importance of exercise and spiritual and mental well-being as having roots in this form of multi-sensory and embodied experience. It wasn't just the physicality of the tasks that drew this embodied attraction but also the feeling of a connection with either land, soil or flora through touch. In this case there is a very spatial and connected awareness with the location of the task. This is opposed to the removed or 'lost' thoughts that were discussed in previous sections. A number of the volunteers were

asked to take their own photos of the volunteering days, be it of task or landscape, whatever they saw as important to them. Linda took the following photo:

Figure 6.12: Linda's soil stained hand.



Source: Photograph taken by Linda, SFRP.

Linda explained that, although technically supposed to be wearing gloves, she liked to feel the soil and tree roots in her hand as she planted. This was partly a practical reason to make sure that the planting was done correctly, but it was also to ensure that she ‘could feel the earth’. William from EEV explained this further:

‘I feel that when we have all that safety gear on I’m not really part of the environment. Goggles, hat, gloves, all that stuff makes me feel I’m behind...erm... some kinda forcefield. It’s hard to explain. I like to feel more exposed to the elements, that’s why I’m out there.’

(William, EEV)

To achieve this feeling of an emotional and physical connection, volunteers would employ several techniques. Larry (SFRP) would lie in the deep heather, often without a top on, and watch the weather pass above him. Others would hug or touch a tree. See figure 6.13 below:

Figure 6.13: Tree hugging (and kissing) in action.



Source: Author's photograph.

Figure 6.13 is obviously staged to some degree, with some of the volunteers laughing and having fun, but the satisfaction some gained from this practice was evident. Feeling the contoured bark of a tree and seeing the life that lives between the bark (insects, lichen, moss, fungi), especially that of the deep ‘jigsaw bark’ of the Scots pine was more common among volunteers than a fully forced hug. The importance given to this touch was evidenced through all the volunteer groups. However, the negative association with tree hugging meant that not everyone would be open to such a practice but this did not diminish their appreciation for the look and touch of the tree. For example, Davis (SFRP) took a very practical view of the tree planting and placed great satisfaction the quality of his planting and the numbers of trees that he could put in the ground. He appreciated the feel of ‘well-packed soil’ around a tree but also stated that he was definitely not a ‘tree-hugger’. He did not want to be associated with soft and spiritual connotations that this behaviour and term suggested.

This idea of touch was taken in a very different way for Anya of NSA. In a conversation with her she talked about how there was ‘nothing better’ than reaching into the soil with her hand and pulling out potatoes she had grown herself from the raised vegetable beds

that she had planted in the urban meadow. The idea that she could do that then take them the two minute walk to her flat added to her sense of achievement and connection with the urban green space. Figure 6.14 shows the raised vegetable beds that Anya collected her vegetables from:

Figure 6.14: Some of the raised NSA vegetable beds.



Source: Author's photograph.

6.2.7 Stillness of task

The term stillness here is used in the way that Conradson (2007) originally used it to describe areas of (predominantly) natural beauty where ‘people may thus find themselves lost for words’, which can reflect an overwhelming sensory or cognitive experience of the present moment. The stillness refers to an experience in area, not the area itself. Conradson goes on to describe stillness as a period of calm within an individual, whereby a person becomes more aware of their direct surroundings and less aware of what is occurring in their wider life. This sensation can happen in any location (Conradson cites a train or plane journey) but he also acknowledges that natural environments and physically distant spaces

form day-to-day living may be most conducive to this. These sensations clearly have connections with mind placement and ideas of being ‘lost’ or wanting to ‘find’ something that were discussed earlier. In this section the phenomenon will be discussed in its relation to task, and in the Section 6.3.2 the importance of stillness in landscape will be explored.

Often volunteers create this opportunity for stillness through a need for completing tasks on their own, removed from other people:

‘Mostly I would probably say I’m a bit of a loner when it comes to tree planting but I think that’s happened more this week than it would normally happen because I’ve found that there seems to be a little bit of a culture that has to get stuff done quite quickly which I didn’t really appreciate if I’m being completely honest. I like to make sure every little tree had a bit of attention before I move on to the next one so I kind of been loneing it a little bit, slowly taking my time and drinking it in.’

(Jason, SFRP)

‘The rhodie bashing is normally something where we are all talking and having a laugh but today I was concentrated mainly on my job of piling the branches so they didn’t touch the ground. There was a bit of an art to it and I just got lost in it, people would dump the stuff beside me and I’d get to work. I was pretty proud of my little pile... well, actually pretty huge pile... by the end of the day!’

(Terry, EEV)

‘The ladies were talking most of the time, about all kinds of things, and asking me about what I do and how I’d come about hearing of them. The periods of chatter were interspersed with quiet periods, the only sounds heard were that of the trowels and the birds. One of the ladies later told me that’s how it always was, it’s a catch-up and a relaxant.’

(East-coast Exotic Gardeners field diary)

In these quotations the balance between, work, socialising and periods of calm came out strongly. This was something that was repeated across the groups, that this balance of activity, productivity and personal moments was important. The nature of volunteering itself as being that of time given willingly by an individual to a cause and the spaces of particularly environmental volunteering lend themselves strongly to keeping and encouraging this balance. The times of stillness were therefore valued and encouraged by the organisations through their ethos and values. This was reflected in the organisations' websites and their aims and objectives. This gives the volunteers the freedom to take their time over tasks and not be focused solely on output. There were tensions, however, between those individuals with this as a goal and others who viewed this aspect as nothing more than wasting time. This reflects the practical versus spiritual motivations that were discussed in Chapter 5. This friction will be discussed more fully within the organisational context in Chapter 8, exploring how these differences of opinion and focus can change the ethical and practical direction of a group. In the vast majority of cases, individuals would accept the way that others worked. Indeed, the way in which the volunteering was engaged with was very significant in the well-being that volunteers felt. The engagement (Thrift, 1998) with the volunteering, in terms of task, was just as important as where the volunteering was taking place. The emotional associations that volunteers gave to their volunteering structured the enjoyment and meaning that they gained from taking part. This was often related to temporal aspects of satisfaction and pleasure in the volunteer work.

6.2.8 Instant gratification versus long-term goals

The tasks could broadly be seen as falling under one of two headings. Firstly, there were tasks that could be completed in a matter of minutes or hours, even a weekend. Tasks such as graffiti removal, fence removal and rhodie bashing had an instant and very visual impact

that volunteers could see and appreciate. It was accepted that these tasks may require repeating at some point in the future, but in the meantime they were complete.

'I don't really know why, but I think I enjoyed the fence removal quite a lot. I think we were working as more of a group then rather than... It was probably more individual for the other two really. We kind of split off and did our own thing a bit more. I think it's got more of a kind of visual end to it as well, you feel like you've done something 'cause you can see what you've done. Whereas, you know you're doing something with the other things and you know you're helping, but it's less obvious somehow and I like to see things like the final product.'

(Erin, SFRP)

Figure 6.15: Before the fence was removed by the group.



Source: Author's photograph.

Figure 6.16: The clear area after fence removal with a newly made habitat pile of fence posts to the left.



Source: Author's photograph.

'I like to clean up or paint over the graffiti. It goes from looking awful, to looking great. I can see what I've done and so can others, there's something pretty nice about that.'

(George, FSP focus group)

This instant gratification gives a strong sense of achievement, either through group or individual work. It takes a slightly different outlook by the volunteers to appreciate the next set of tasks, but one that can be just as gratifying. This second type of task takes place over a longer period of time, from years to human (and tree) lifetimes. This was often involved in the process that goes through the seed collecting to tree planting tasks. Each task in itself could stand alone but the full process could take decades. This could be seen in both positive and negative lights.

'the tree planting is more tranquil and actually, I think, probably, why I'm here. You know what I mean, 'cause as you say why'd you want to come up and plant trees for a week, well

it's because I want to plant trees...and I have a nice image of in 100 years time where we we're working today there'll be a nice wood.'

(Graham, SFRP)

'I can see myself as part of something when I am planting trees. I know the care and attention that has gone into collecting the seeds and bringing them up in the nursery. I can feel a connection with the volunteers that have come before and after me; it is quite a responsibility to put them out in the hill.'

(Theresa, SFRP)

'Interviewer: Do you feel you are looking after the park for future generations?'

Hannah: Well, em, the park's always been a big part of my life and I do feel that I would like to pass it on to others. I like the wildness of the park so don't think that should be changed and too... you know... formalised. I do think about that when we are doing tasks, hopefully what we do encourages others into the future.'

(Hannah, FSP)

Previously discussed themes of stewardship and responsibility are reflected again in these quotes. There was a general appreciation and acceptance among most volunteers that in a person's lifetime they may not be able to fully witness the benefits to an area of the volunteering that they do, especially in terms of tree planting. There is a form of pride and satisfaction, however, taken from the fact that this may be appreciated by or passed on to others. Some volunteers, as illustrated by Graham and Theresa, take comfort in both imagined people and imagined futures contributing to and benefiting from the tasks that they themselves have volunteered to perform. These responses reflect the importance of coming closer to other ecologies and rhythms of life (Conradson, 2005b) and the ability that this has to distance an individual from everyday routines and find renewed energy and perspective. This theme of temporality is continued within the volunteer's relationships with landscape and nature.

6.3 Importance of landscape

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the landscapes in which environmental volunteering is conducted contribute to both why individuals initially want to volunteer and also why they continue to do so. There is consideration given to not only the wider landscape, but also to the interactions with nature and micro-landscapes. The reasons behind this and how these were vocalised by volunteers across the groups will be expanded upon here. This will include looking at the themes of stillness that were discussed in the previous section but also looking at other themes of weather conditions, seasonality and the influence of beauty on the volunteer experience.

The theme of stillness was discussed above in terms of its relationship to task. Here the term will be looked at in how it can be applied to the volunteer within urban and wilderness landscapes.

6.3.1 Stillness in urban green spaces

Figure 6.17, below, is taken of the NSA meadow space. There is an organised local community lunch featured in the centre of the photograph but the purpose here is to emphasise the proximity to the tenement buildings that surround it on all sides. Even although there is this proximity to built landscapes and volunteers' homes, opportunities for stillness in this space were still vocalised and observed.

Figure 6.17: The urban green space site for NSA.



Source: Author's photograph.

'While having lunch I noticed one of the volunteers on his own examining a small flower in the meadow. He looked completely engrossed and was there for a good 10/15 minutes examining the flower then sitting and looking at his surroundings. When we continued with the litter pick I asked him if he had found something. It turned out to be a small orchid that he had never noticed before in his time in the meadow and said he couldn't believe how much nature had taken over what was disused football fields in a space of 25 years.'

(NSA field diary)

The above example reflects the possibility of new discovery and reflection in spaces that even local residents thought they knew well. As a local resident for many years, the above individual was still surprised and humbled by a new discovery on this micro level. He is focussing on this one small area, this one small plant, and not engaging in this moment with the tenement buildings he could see if he looked up and around. His thoughts are of the plant itself but these pass into how it has taken hold and reclaimed this space over time.

The eco-poetry group associated with CEG is one that promotes stillness. The poetry group meets in various green spaces across the area to write, deliberately picking spots within the surrounding urban area that inspire their imagination and their work. From this they produce pamphlets and readings to complement projects going on within the broader CEG group as well as hold public readings. The landscape is therefore central to their creativity and how they communicate their work. These can be poems about the beauty of an area but they can also be more critical views:

*'A hundred red flags spread
Across the Reserve –
What are they for?
Markers for rare wild flowers?
No! They show piles of "evidence"
From dog owners who just don't
Give a – damn!'*

(Excerpt from a CEG poem, Anonymous eco-poetry group member, CEG poetry pamphlet)

CEG had organised red markers to be put beside piles of dogs' dirt that had been left in the local nature reserve. This was to try and draw attention to the problem and 'shame' irresponsible dog owners. The work of the eco-poetry group was, therefore, not always focused on the beauty of an area but also used to highlight problems. These would often relate to the wider projects that CEG were involved in.

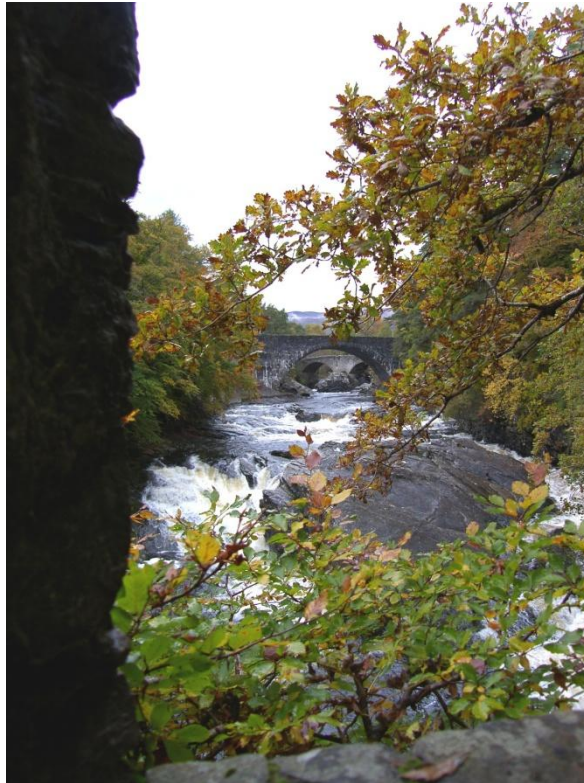
6.3.2 Stillness in wilderness areas

The vastness and perceived emptiness of the Scottish Highlands resulted in a large amount of feedback from volunteers about the effects that this landscape had on them:

'I went for a walk yesterday by the river just walking through a nice little wood, it was brilliant. I'm not sure if it's maybe something that...I'm talking absolute bollocks now...about whether its something maybe in our psyche, you know, that we just like, because we've been round them (trees) for like thousands and thousands of years, we feel quite comfortable around them, I don't know, there is definitely some sort of connection.'

(Graham, SFRP)

Figure 6:18: River Moriston, the location of Graham's walk.



Source: Author's photograph.

Even in a group situation where there are others in close proximity there is time for silence and reflection:

'And the day that we did the fence removal, admitted everyone was knackered, but at lunchtime no one said anything for forty minutes, everyone just sat, ate their lunch and just looked over the hills and at the scenery and stuff, and just, yeah... but it's not people being silent 'cause they're in a mood or 'cause they're pissed off, it's just 'cause, kind of, that's what they're into doing, isn't it.'

(Graham, SFRP)

Figure 6.19: SFRP volunteers having lunch and looking across the glen.



Source: Author's photograph.

This idea of connecting with the landscape was particularly encouraged by SFRP by holding ‘attunements’ at the beginning of each task day. These were deliberately held in the landscape in which the volunteers would be working. The volunteers would stand and hold hands in a circle and close their eyes. During this time somebody would quietly talk through the sounds and feel of the surroundings, the weather and the bird song, perhaps the sound of a nearby river. This was followed by a period of silence. This was designed to help the volunteers tune in with their surroundings and the task at hand before it started. This was a moment to stop and think about where they were and why they were here. Some volunteers found this unusual or unexpected to begin with, but everyone still took part. Some of the more sceptical members even found themselves enjoying the attunements by the end of the work-week.

Figure 6.20: A SFRP attunement about to begin.



Source: Author's photograph.

The landscapes themselves lend themselves to moment of stillness. Throughout the EEV and SFRP ethnographic field diaries there are moments in which volunteers can be observed sitting and looking out across a loch, glen or forest:

'I think I'm more looking around me or looking at the moss, the colours of the moss, the different plants and things, erm, and I do stop and do that quite often because it's just so interesting...the views and the mists and all that, I don't think I think about things elsewhere very much, I mean obviously sometimes. But er, I think I tend to be more focussed on where I am, not what I'm doing.'

(Brenda, SFRP)

'I could see one of the volunteers (I couldn't make out who it was) in the distance looking down over the loch. There were views straight over the trees that we had been thinning and over to the other side of the valley, with the loch in between. The volunteer was gazing over for some time.'

(SFRP field diary)

Figure 6.21: Lichen and moss growing on rock, with Glen Moriston in the background.



Source: Author's photograph. This photo was taken on the same work-week that Brenda was on.

Brenda is both taking her direct landscape and the wider landscape in when she is observing what is around her, the micro and the macro landscape. There are therefore two aspects to this. There is the micro landscape and closeness of nature that the volunteer can touch, and there is also the macro landscape that can draw a volunteer's gaze. She is taking the focus away from what it is she is doing, to where it is that she is doing it. Even when the SFRP volunteers are not out on task, the evening provides an opportunity to experience this stillness in a different way.

'It's a whole different world to me – I can just walk outside the bothy and see all of this (points out the window). I like to go for a quick walk after dinner in the evening as it is getting dark. The silence and the emptiness around... I love it every time'

(Colin, SFRP)

Figure 6.22: The view outside the remote SFRP bothy. Volunteers' clothes are drying on the line.



Source: Author's photograph.

Figure 6.22 and the quotation from Colin shows that, even beside the residential accommodation, the volunteers would still use the opportunity to enjoy the surrounding landscape and value their proximity to it.

6.3.3 Weather conditions

The volunteers were asked if the weather conditions affected their decisions to either volunteer at different times of year or on certain days of weekends. The responses were actually much more varied than expected:

'I've tried to take different times of the year and different locations. I don't know if it changed my approach... I mean certainly this time I made sure I kind of stocked up with a lot of you know, relevant gear that was appropriate for the time of year. But yeah I don't know if my approach to a spring week is any different to an autumn week. That's quite interesting actually, I've not really thought about it.'

(Jason, SFRP)

'Peter – If the weather was guaranteed to be like this I'd come back cause I think if the weather had been rainy every day I think everybody would have been miserable and if you came back wet you'd just want to go to bed and keep warm.'

Martin – That's good bonding though, that is. If you're wet and miserable together it's something to complain about.'

P – It can give you a good moan...(laughs)'

(Peter and Martin, SFRP)

'I love the extremes of weather, I'd be out there in the snow anytime.'

(Zanda, EEV focus group)

The influence of the weather conditions was very much up to the individual volunteer. For work-week attendance the decision tended to be when they could make time to go along. Often, the decision over where the week was located was more important than when and what the weather would be like. As alluded to by Peter and Martin, even wet weather can help to bond the group through common adversity. On single work days, held by EEV, FSP and CEG, the return volunteers would tend to turn up no matter what the weather conditions, but numbers would often be down. This was an accepted part of this type of volunteering, however, and not something that volunteers would worry about. The only time that the weather began to be discussed and worried about was when there was an event such as an open day or community meet-up. In these cases, the same as any other group organising an event like this, the weather would influence how the day was run and also the attendance figures. Extremes of weather would often bring feelings of excitement. When talking about the snow storm that was beginning to come in the photograph below Evelyn (SFRP) said she enjoyed that feeling of being 'exposed' to the elements. This was reinforced by Frank (SFRP) who said how he would much rather be out in the snow and wind than in the calm and sunshine.

Figure 6.23: Tree planting site in Glen Cannich at the beginning of a snow storm. Often this extreme weather was enjoyed by the volunteers.



Source: Author's photograph.

6.3.4 Seasonality

The solstice group associated with CEG organises bonfires at various equinox and solstice events throughout the year, deliberately choosing a nearby area, quite often an open field or beach front. These events are used to promote awareness of the passing of time and also the connections of individuals' own body clocks with that of the passing seasons. The temporality of the seasons and nature, and the value that volunteers give to their own awareness of the passing of time is important here.

Figure 6.24: The beach front. The site for a number of CEG tasks and solstice events.



Source: Author's photograph.

This practice was perhaps the most obvious that linked in with the seasons but there are examples within the other groups, especially when it comes to planting cycles, that highlight the importance of seasonality to some of the work:

'If you mess something up with a plant, if you're trying to get some flower or fruit and you mess it up one season, then you can't do anything about it or you're limited to what you can do about it until the next season so it gives you patience in some ways.'

(Danielle, SFRP)

'It does make you more aware of things when you're out there and experiencing them month after month. I didn't really used to know much about plants and growing seasons and all that but you have to be more in tune with that so you know what you are doing and don't...erm... plant at all the wrong time of year'

(Joyce, EEV)

'The landscape changes. I like bare trees a lot of the time and then you see some of them flower, you see some of them fruit, and sometimes as well we'll do the whole kind of seed collection, some will do seed preparation, then growing them on and potting, then taking them out there on the hill. We'll also go out and take cuttings, or take out non-native trees so the other ones will grow. There is... it's nice to see it all through the seasons and my

mood can change depending on the weather and the seasons. I've also been up hillsides in the scorching sun in April or October in t-shirt sleeves with sunglasses on, too warm in the work which is crazy. Then sometimes, seeing the snow on the mountains is an amazing thing, you know...'

(Danielle, SFRP)

In the above quotations, Danielle is linking her own outlook and moods into both the growing seasons of plants and trees and also how the weather can change the landscape she is working. Her own appreciation of the passing of time and how certain tasks are restricted by these aspects have helped her to both appreciate and value these landscapes in different ways:

'it's ten years or something when they show this site and this tree stump is all barren and then ten years later there is all the ground cover and the trees all growing about and it is an entirely different picture so I am starting to see that happening year after year which is quite exciting.'

(Danielle, SFRP)

Even over a longer period of time, from seasons to years, Danielle has been able to view the changing landscapes where she has volunteered. This aesthetic quality is taken further when the beautiful nature of the landscape is discussed.

6.3.5 Beauty

As discussed in the motivations chapter, one of the most common reasons to begin environmental volunteering was to see and spend time in beautiful areas. This could work from the scale of the local park, right up to the vistas of the Scottish Highlands. When some of the volunteers were asked to take and provide their own photos of their volunteering experiences a large number of these were of their surrounding landscape and

the reasons for this were the emotions that these landscapes provide and the way the volunteers viewed how they are contributing to the landscape. Some of these will be used as examples of how the volunteers expressed these feelings through their photography and their feedback:

Figure 6.25: View over Loch Ness.



Source: Photograph taken by Peter, SFRP. This was taken by Peter on the way to removing a section of fencing the loch. He took it because he ‘felt privileged to be working on a beautiful day above such an iconic Scottish area’.

Figure 6.26: Sandmartin nesting bank.



Source: Photograph taken by Georgina, CEG. This was taken by Georgina while down looking at the bank that the group had built. She feels that ‘the location is just gorgeous, with the wild thistles and flowers all around and the beach on the other side. I could spend a whole day sitting down here’.

Figure 6.27: Scots Pine tree.



Source: Photograph taken by Polly, SFRP. She explained why she took this photograph: ‘I do feel a connection with Scots pine more other trees, they just look so majestic. I know as well that that’s why we’re here, to put more of these trees back into this part of the world. I took this because you can see a forest in the background on the left and bare glen on the right, with both new regeneration at the front and an older standing tree. I thought it showed all different ways of seeing this landscape.’

Figure 6.28: FSP waterfall.



Source: Photograph taken by Lydia, FSP. This picture was taken on the river in Southside Park. It is one of the best know areas of the park and is where the majority of the £70,000 funding grant is going on developing access. Lydia took this photograph as she said ‘this is my favourite place in the park. The water and the colours of the trees looked amazing and there is not a building or other person in sight.’

The accounts and photography from the examples above contribute to why the volunteers often feel such a passion for the volunteer work that they do. In each of the cases the volunteer is linking the beauty of the landscape in to the work that they are doing. Peter is removing obsolete fencing from the area to help both the appearance of that area, but also the red and black grouse populations who often fly low and impact into the deer fences. Georgina has, through volunteering with CEG, contributed to encouraging sandmartins to continue to migrate to this area and maintain themselves as part of this area. Polly is linking her photograph into the tree planting task and how this is going to help regenerate and contribute to an already beautiful landscape. Finally, Lydia has taken a photograph of her favourite space in the park, a space that is going to be enhanced by the funding that FSP has successfully obtained. So, not only are individual volunteers in these areas able to see and gaze at the landscape, they are also putting value and satisfaction into how they can contribute to this landscape, either in ways of regenerating, enhancing or maintaining. It is interesting to note, however, that each of these photographs did not include any of the volunteers themselves but rather took on the impression of a 'natural' landscape. The volunteers would talk about their role in the creation of the landscape in terms of the task that they take part in, but then take images with that aspect removed. There seems to be a tension between the ideal of a 'bare' and untouched landscape, and the necessary presence of the volunteers and the impact they looked to have upon this landscape.

6.4 Task and landscape discussion

Section 6.2 described the range of tasks that the various groups participated in, including individual, group and committee tasks. This analysis and focus on task was to help answer research question two which sought to investigate what kinds of environmental volunteering could enable well-being. There were a number of themes that subsequently emerged from the research and go towards answering this question. The doing of a task

could encourage volunteers to get ‘lost’ in the job that they were engaged in and to use it as time to clear their mind. On the other hand, this time could also encourage the volunteer to think of issues going on in their wider life. This could either provide time to think these issues through, or in some cases bring up memories of loved ones who had died. Some volunteers also spoke of painful memories that, especially repetitive tasks, could contribute to. In many tasks however, especially group tasks, the focus would be on conversation and socialising as well as getting the job done. Throughout work days volunteers would also take the time to look out at the landscape and enjoy the environment that they are working in. In particularly physical task such as tree felling or fence removal, a number of volunteers expressed the delight that they took in the destructive side of the work and how they used that to release physical energy. Other volunteers explained that they use their volunteering time to recharge and they would have feelings of angst and frustration if they did not manage to attend their regular volunteering days. Again, in this section, the embodied nature of environmental volunteering task was highlighted, with volunteers putting a strong importance in having a strong bodily and sensory connection to the land that they were working in. This shows the importance of the active nature of the volunteer work that is a particular focus of research question four. This active work had implications to both physical and emotional connections. In relation to mind placement, the importance of the stillness of task, and the way some of the volunteer groups deliberately encourage volunteers to take their time and appreciate the present, are central factors in the experience. This can lead to spaces of relaxation and reflection for the volunteers. Across the tasks, there is also a balance to be reached between instant aesthetic satisfaction and gratification of seeing a task complete but there is also the awareness of advancing longer term goals. Volunteers took enjoyment from completing a single task from start to finish and seeing an end result to their effort. As well as this, many also viewed themselves and the job they do as being part of a bigger picture, as part of a wider physical and imagined

team that exists in the present but also has connections to achievements of those in the past and the endeavor of those who take up the task and ethos in the future.

As well as the impacts of these active and embodied volunteering tasks the necessary attendance and work done in committee meeting and fundraising was considered. In the case of CEG and FSP, this was a central part of how they operate. Certain individuals take a stronger role in these particular activities and although the processes can sometimes be time consuming and frustrating, they also acquire pleasure from seeing the end result of their effort. This encourages them to continue with this effort and creates a sense of optimism within the wider group. These tasks also enable volunteers to put other skills to use, be them communicative or clerical, therefore bringing a very different skills set that the active environmental volunteering. Consequently, the overall view of the volunteering experience is central to understanding the kinds of well-being implications that the work has on individuals. The research has shown how there are positive well-being impacts that go beyond just the active task benefits, enabling volunteers to increase the emotional and social enjoyment that they experience

Continuing Conradson's theme of stillness into Section 6.3, the opportunity for this form of well-being was discussed in terms of both urban green spaces and wilderness spaces. It may have been more pronounced in the more remote areas that SFRP worked in but there still existed opportunities for reflection within the urban green and park spaces as illustrated by volunteers in NSA and also the CEG eco-poetry group. In the wilderness areas ideas associated with stillness were actively encouraged by SFRP. Volunteers who had removed themselves from the spaces of their everyday lives to these more remote locations seemed to have a stronger propensity to these moments of calm and reflexion. Accounts of the importance of weather were quite varied. Discussions by the volunteers would be more concerned with the practicalities of different weather conditions, as

opposed to how these affected their moods or emotions. They would most commonly be discussed in terms of how adverse weather could negatively contribute to lower numbers of attendees at an event. Some volunteers would discuss their awareness of seasonality in a more emotional way.

The connection and awareness gained from plant cycles and growing seasons promoted feelings of patience and taking things at a slower pace. Viewing this growth over different seasons and across a number of years and seeing this progress was also valued. This highlighted the importance of the temporal and spatial aspects of ecological citizenship (Thomashow, 1995; Dobson, 2000), ideas that look across space and time. Ideas such as ‘memorialisation’ (Withers, 2005) show how volunteers would engage with a certain place in time and relate their actions to past events by planting tree memorials or thinking about loved ones as they were out on task. Most obviously, the CEG solstice group celebrated the passing of the different lunar cycles through holding bonfires and events in various volunteering spaces in the area. Being able to link in with these cycles was viewed by the volunteers who participated as being important in not letting time ‘pass them by’ and to be aware of the moment.

Finally, the idea of working in a beautiful landscape was valued. Often this was part of the motivation to participate in environmental volunteering but it also went a stage further than this. When asked to photograph and describe the volunteer work, a large number of the responses were wider landscape photographs. These were then used by the volunteers to explain their role within this landscape – what they felt that their volunteering was contributing. This understanding of being part of the landscape continued the theme of stewardship and responsibility but also elicited feelings of pride in what they could achieve both individually and as part of a wider group. However, it could also be viewed that volunteers were one step removed from the participant photography. They would speak of

their volunteering and what it contributed, and then seemingly omit this from the photographs they took as they volunteered. Consequently, these images of landscape could best be viewed as a process of landscaping (Wylie, 2007), where landscape can be considered as a practice that helps shape the self and the body, through action and performance. This situates the volunteer within landscape but also weaves through their own actions, beliefs and ethics. This makes it possible to view the tasks as a more transformative process that can shape the landscape, while acknowledging the emotional and practical role of the volunteer in doing so. This shows the importance of the landscape to the well-being of the volunteers, but also the tasks that they are physically and emotionally involved in. This meeting of task and landscape, with volunteer values and beliefs, is where environmental volunteering is particularly distinct. The following chapter will go on to explore the social and community and citizenship connections that can be associated with active environmental volunteering.

Chapter 7: Community, Social Networks and Citizenship

This chapter aims to explore how volunteers identify with notions of community and citizenship and how they frame their own volunteering. To do this, the chapter is split into two main sections. Section 7.1 looks at aspects of community and social networks that have revealed themselves through the research, examining various concepts and understandings of the term ‘community’ and how it is employed and identified with by the volunteers. Section 7.2 examines more closely the volunteer interactions with citizenship, particularly studying concepts of active and ecological citizenship and how individuals (dis)engage with the usage and meaning of these terms.

7.1 Community and social networks

The use of the term community in this section is one that is being used to describe a number of interacting factors within and through the case study groups. Community can be described as a site in which political subjects are nurtured and where the social capital that many commentators believe is essential to democracy can be fostered (Putnam, 2000). However, it is also a contested term and a site of social interactions, politics and struggles. In this first section the interactions will be considered through the volunteers’ social networks in relation to the groups. This will take into account how the shared values and interests of the group provide a commonality that also builds a platform to understand different identities within community (Friedman, 1989) that can be produced through these relations. The communities that are catered for in this sense can be traditional forms of community relating to territorial proximity and an attachment to a bounded place, such as a neighbourhood. However, there will also be evidence of community forming around volunteer identities and commonalities that bring them together to participate in

environmental volunteering. This considers Miller's breaking of communities into those that have a territorial basis and those that are spatially dispersed and 'stretched out' (Miller, 1993). Those with a territorial basis have received most attention and often are focused on the local neighbourhood action group or village council. The 'stretched-out' version is more complex and has begun to receive more attention. Anderson's (1991) 'imagined communities', with its basis in a national community – imagined due to the majority of the members never meeting face-to-face – begins to bring out some of these ideas. Spatially dispersed groups or those whose members perhaps meet only once or very seldom can still inspire strong identification from individuals despite not belonging to a set space. These bounded and unbounded ideas of community can be illustrated through the environmental volunteer groups and how they both build and maintain their social networks and how they have found commonality, not just within space but also within values.

These bounded and unbounded ideas bring in both sections of the word 'community'. This includes the 'common' shared experiences and ethics of individuals as well as the 'unity' that can be bred from this (Staeheli, 2008). It is the 'unity' part that is perhaps more interesting. This opens up the question as together the sameness is being constructed within the groups or whether the groups merely identify and come together over a particular shared goal. The commonality of the volunteer group ethos may therefore lead to exclusion of those not sharing these values. It is important to see community through this complex viewpoint and see it as a heterogeneous term. This complexity will be explored through the social networks that are formed in the environmental volunteering groups and the varied communities that these group networks and relations produce.

Three of the case study groups carried out their tasks in particularly bounded spaces. In these cases the areas have been given set physical boundaries. Friends of Southside Park

(FSP) carry out their tasks within the borders of the park area. The committee members and volunteers are local residents who live near the boundary of the park and have this space as a shared interest. Natural Space Action (NSA) work in a smaller green space known locally as the ‘meadow’ which is surrounded by tenement buildings in the west end of the city. The volunteers in this space also live in the local area around the boundaries of the meadow. The Community Environment Group (CEG) operates within a seaside town area. Again, the committee members and volunteers are from the town and the tasks and projects are carried out within these spaces. However, it is not just the groups with solely bounded associations that will be considered. The complex interactions of the Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP) and Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV) will be examined later. The social networks of these groups can take form in a number of different ways.

7.1.1 The bounded vision of a volunteer community

This section will discuss how groups can operate within a specific geographical location, exploring how volunteers identify with that particular space. FSP will be used as an example. FSP formed as a joint venture between local residents the city council. The story was explained by one of the committee members:

‘Me and a couple of the guys had been talking in the pub and we wanted to clean up the river under the bridge... there were trolleys and things like that. We got together one weekend and went out to do it. Apparently the fishing club had the same idea and I got talking to a couple of them as well when we were out. We were approached by one of the local rangers and he said the council would be interested in helping start up a ‘friends of’ group if any of us would be interested. That’s how it started, we all met up... em... with others who were interested and got it going’

(George, FSP)

The group is therefore one that was formed by both the local initiative from residents that lived beside the park and also the encouragement of the city council. There are a number of stakeholder groups within the park who are represented amongst FSP. Some are transient members and volunteers who come along to committee meetings and attend tasks when it is in an area that specifically interests them. Due to the large size of the area there are a number of interest groups and organisations that use the park. These include an equestrian centre, a community centre, professional dog walkers, joggers, cyclists and fishermen. Representatives from each of these have attended meetings of FSP, to either get an idea of the work that the group does or to bring up particular issues. When an individual cannot attend in person they often pass on information to one of the committee members.

Volunteers would predominantly use the word community when describing local residents and their connections from specific areas around the space of volunteering tasks. As one committee member expressed it:

'I think we're more known in the community now, people know you do that within the community, and yes you have sort of, stronger relationships that you've built up with certain individuals that are members now, and stuff like that, and just people...you know more about them, people in the community, because they're members so you maybe know where they come from and they ask you for leaflets, so you get talking, so it definitely has, I think, made a stronger bond with this community and, you know, I think it has made some more stronger relationships here.'

(Barbara, FSP)

Here Barbara is talking about how she is recognised by her neighbours and other residents who have become members of the group but not necessarily been out on volunteering tasks. She is putting importance beyond the reaches of those who are solely motivated to go out and take part in active environmental volunteering, to those who also have a vested interest in the park and the local area, bringing a commonality to the interest groups listed

above. From the inception of the group and the recruiting of new members, the existing social networks of the individual are significant. The idea of knowing more people from the area and learning more about them, as well as sharing the issues of the park are seen as positives for Barbara's sense of community. In this area, the relationship that the locals have with the park is often viewed in a very spatial way:

'we'd like the community surrounding the park to come to us maybe more than us going to them, because I think we see Southside Park as our boundary really, because that's what we should be dealing with, you know, and I don't think...there's been some things that have come up outside the park and we don't really feel that that's what we should be looking at.'

(Hannah, FSP)

Hannah viewed the role of the more prominent committee members as one that builds relationships with those people that have an interest in the park and also to raise issues that have been aired to them at group meetings. An example of 'some things that have come up outside the park' was the possibility of group volunteers helping out at the nearby local community centre. It was a contested issue within the group as there was some disagreement from members at committee meetings over whether the group should participate in such tasks. Hannah's view, which was the overall decision taken at the meetings, was that tasks and efforts should be made solely within the boundaries of the park. This was justified through not wanting to dilute the efforts and to keep a focus on their aim of enhancing and looking after the park.

One of the ways in which this communication along the park boundary has helped is to bring residents from opposite sides of the park together. Although managed by the local council, the park also crossed the border into another adjoining council district. This was

seen as a boundary within the park itself and group members would often talk about ‘my side of the park’ in these terms. Barbara talks about this split:

‘Sean and I’d always met in the park before the ‘Friends of’ group, ‘cause Sean walks through from the other end every night to go to the pub, so he was somebody that you bumped into and spoke to because you saw them regularly, um, so I had known him a little bit already, you know, before the group and now that he’s involved in the group I see him more often, sort of thing. Whereas Sandra, who also lives in the same block as Richard (at the other council end), I hadn’t known at all until she became involved so...and our initial secretary came from that side and I’d never met them before, so you do get to meet people that...there definitely is a border thing, it’s to do with the local authority border almost...so anyone that does come from that area of the park is from the other side and there is a kind of boundary thing almost... I think because it’s a officially this council area’s park and it’s just... I think that they feel that they sometimes... well, I don’t know, whether they feel as though they haven’t as much influence... I think that’s a challenge for us sometimes, but I think the more people that we get involved, we’ve got a more mixed management committee from that, which I think is good, because the more we can involve people from all surrounding areas then the better, because you’re kind of covering it all.’

(Barbara, FSP)

The commonality to bring these sides together is therefore the park itself. However, it is not only the council boundaries that this commonality stretches.

As well as this language of ‘sides’ of the park there was also a split between those members and volunteers that live in the local tenements and those that live in the ‘posh houses’ (Sam, FSP). This language was used by some of the volunteers to describe where they came from and how it had increased their interaction with those from the other type of housing. A number of the return volunteers are from the same street, but this street has a clear split between tenement housing and the detached housing and bungalows further up the hill. Although often mentioned in meetings in a jovial manner, a number of volunteers saw the bond that this brought as a very positive thing:

'It is funny how you often don't know your neighbours and kinda don't bother saying hi... or just don't know people. I met this lot {talking about the rest of the focus group} a year or so back with FSP and now I can't get rid of them (laughter)... it does make a difference to the street.'

(May, FSP focus group)

The focus group that is quoted from, above, was taking place in May's living room with a number of participants who she had met through the group. The linkages that were built therefore occur on a number of levels. The social networks built through FSP add to the volunteer's experience of the everyday, contributing to breaking down what can be viewed as a class divide on the level of the street. This was expressed across the council area boundary as well as interactions at this street level.

One of the other main functions of FSP, as well as carrying out the tasks, is to help organise the annual fun day in the park. This is carried out in conjunction with the local council. The fun day includes a number of shows, stalls, acts and activities within the park, usually on a Sunday in the summer. The day is particularly marketed towards families and is viewed by the FSP committee members as the most important day for the group. FSP help organise the event but they also run a stall to pick up new members and raise awareness of the work they do within the park throughout the year and encourage them to get involved. This involvement does not always necessarily mean getting people out on task days, although that is part of it, but also to raise awareness of contested issues in the park and how it is used and managed. Being able to view the group as a contact point is part of that. The success of this is mainly judged by the numbers of people who attend and, to a lesser extent, the money raised and number of new members that sign up to the group. The assumption is that this will have a positive effect on who is aware of FSP and

therefore gain support within local residents in terms of supporting their aims and attending further volunteer days.

7.1.2 Beyond the bounded vision of community

This section sets out how volunteers can identify with values beyond just the bounded version of community that is described above. Instead, these motivations can work across spatial scales. FSP was formed through discussions between the city council and local residents who were motivated to take action in clearing up an area of the park. There is not always this simple territorially proximate motivation for beginning an environmental volunteer group. NSA was started by a SFRP volunteer, Derek, on his return from a work-week in the Highlands. Derek's initial motivation to get involved with SFRP was to interact in a practical way with the restoration of the ancient Scottish pine woodland. His particular area of interest was the reintroduction of native Scottish wildlife. That links in with SFRP's ethos of reintroducing and restoring the forest to the same state as it was before mass deforestation. The volunteers can therefore identify with values that go beyond just the bounded community that was described in the previous section. The particular work-week that Derek was on contained a number of different personalities, of very varied backgrounds and environmental volunteering experience, but it was a group that bonded throughout the week particularly well. Clive commented on this week during one of the work-week mornings by saying that he felt the others in the group were an 'extension' of himself and that he sometimes found it hard to understand those with opposing environmental views. Clive's comment came after a wide-ranging discussion within the group at breakfast over general environmental management and actions that an individual can take. He appeared to take comfort in the fact that other people shared his views and worries about the state of global environmental issues. Although the volunteers on this week will almost certainly not all be physically together again, the shared

experience and reaffirming of their environmental beliefs within a supportive and proactive atmosphere hold them together in a shared ‘unity’, one that they both brought with them but also built upon when they were there. Larry (SFRP) spoke about this transient coming together of a group at the final SFRP sharing on a different work-week. He said that it did not matter to him that he would probably not see any of the volunteers on that week again as he had enjoyed the ‘bond and experiences that they shared’. This highlights the types of community that take form particularly within SFRP and EEV. This will be discussed in the final section here on ‘stretched-out’ communities.

Returning to NSA, Derek wanted to become involved in a project that was closer to where he lived and was inspired to take action on a derelict piece of land beside his home after the SFRP week:

‘I walked by it every day and always thought that it was a shame how it had fallen into such a mess. I thought that it would look great if it just got tidied up and that’s where it all started. I posted flyers through letterboxes for the first clean-up and started the website and it all went from there.’

(Derek, NSA)

It was from these beginnings that the group started. The space was ash surface football pitches and tennis courts until the late 1970s when they were left for the plants to reclaim. The space is now covered in grass and has a number of tree and plant species, as well as wildlife living within it. It is surrounded by tenement buildings on each side. The first clean-up day that was mentioned by Derek was attended by over 30 local residents who filled around 70 black bags with litter. The participants were mainly local residents who had seen posters in the area and came along to help. The group has since then continued to run volunteer days at the weekends and also tried to encourage local people to use the space. This has been done, as well as through the litter picking, in a number of ways. The

group secured and cleaned out the old changing rooms that are built on the land. The brick building had been getting used as a drugs den and on the first clean-up there was various drugs paraphernalia in the open building. To make the area safer and more likely for local residents to use, this building was cleaned out and secured using locked wooden doors and window hatches. The building now houses the group's wheelbarrows, gloves, gardening tools and litter pickers that can be accessed on task days.

It was highlighted by the group that 'local businesses' have also donated wooden barrels and troughs, as well as soil, so that residents can grow their own vegetables. Different residents look after their own raised bed and tend their own vegetables. There is space left here for others to become involved. A year after the group was started, they held a lunch event in the space. People were invited to bring their own food and drink to the event and the idea was to meet your neighbours. There were a number of gazebos erected, a local student playing music, an area for face painting, a stall with information about NSA, as well as tables covered in food and drink that people had brought with them to share. The event was attended by people that had been along to the clean-ups but also captured other residents through posters, flyers, the group website, word of mouth and passing curiosity. Ashling, the group treasurer spoke about the event:

'I couldn't believe how many people turned up! I made a point of speaking to as many people as I could. The uni lot were great doing the DJ-ing and the face painting and the kids had a great time. The coconut stall was totally random! I knew some of them from past tasks but the vast majority of people I had never seen before, even though they live nearby. It meant we got to ask them their opinions on the space and what they thought about how it should be used. My favourite was a guy who was just walking through and wondering what the hell was going on... and like, joining in with everyone else.'

(Ashling, NSA)

The language used by Ashling, and other group members and participants, highlight the importance they place upon what goes on in the 'local' area. The positive impact that the group viewed themselves as exerting was illustrated by how these events, and the use of the space itself, created links between residents who would not typically interact with each other. However, this labeling and use of the space did create spaces of friction and exclusion.

There was contestation over this area of land and how it should be used. It was owned by the city council and they wanted to sell the land to be developed into flats. As a consequence, they were trying to evict the volunteers from the land and have them remove their vegetable beds. The group argued that the local residents were not consulted fully enough over what the land would be used for and claimed that the majority of local residents would rather see the area be used as a green space that is part meadow, part park and part allotment. Through community events, vegetable growing, litter clean-ups and other environmental volunteering participation the members of NSA were trying to put together a case of community support for the continued management and use of the area as this community green space.

However, the idealistic notion of local, resident participation heralded by the group carries baggage that parallels wider critiques of using the word community as a universal and overarching term. For example, the council argued that when the plans for flat development were first aired there was very little resistance from local residents. They claim that it was the minority who were using this green space as an allotment and wanting to develop it in this way. The nature of NSA and their use of the space may also restrict those who do not have a particularly environmental interests and ethos. For example, the brick building containing the tools that the group used was securely locked, with only Derek and Ashling having keys. This had consequently evicted the drug users who used

the building. Although argued as a positive consequence, these past users of the space were also likely to be local residents who have now been excluded from this space and marginalised to yet another location. This is an extreme example but one that can also play out in more subtle ways. It is not every local resident who will want to plant their own vegetables or fruit trees. The council claimed that building the flats will serve a wider purpose of providing more housing in an area where there is high demand. Derek argued that although the environmental focus was the starting point, that the groups proposed use of the space would include those who did not necessarily engage directly with an environmental ethos.

As in the FSP fun day, the successful events such as the lunch day helped attract other local people to the group's cause and also encouraged those individuals to use that local green space and interact with both the space itself and with other users. The group viewed the future of the land as being a green space but with multiple uses. This would include open meadow space, allotment areas and open recreation spaces. The momentum that was developed through the events and tasks was important in maintaining the groups motivation and continued work. This local profile, and a focus on 'outputs', was one that was particularly centred on through the volunteering and functioning of CEG.

7.1.3 Output and impact

This section looks at how a group can frame their volunteering 'outputs'. This is not only a focus on the volunteers, but also the wider community. CEG will be used as the example. CEG were based in a small east-coast seaside town. The group was made up of a number of interest groups within the area that have a range of environmental interest. These included the eco-poetry group, two youth groups, a solstice celebration group, as well as influence from those with more historical and wildlife interests. This group was not

structured in quite the same way as the others, in that it did not hold a set weekly or monthly task that all the members or volunteers attended. Instead, the particular interest groups continued with their own projects and report back to the committee meetings on the progress. Often, these interest groups combined and crossed over on certain projects or drifted in and out of activity. The eco-poetry group and the solstice celebration group within CEG have already been discussed. There are also projects that CEG carried out that had a finite length with particular outputs. The way these projects start is that a local resident or group of residents approached the group with an idea for an environmental project in the area. From here, the ideas were discussed as to whether they are feasible and appropriate to the work of CEG. The group's main funding comes from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the projects they undertook must fit in with these SNH goals. This is one of the reasons why CEG focussed on tangible outputs. These had taken the form of poetry leaflets, DVDs of events, public AGM evenings and fun days. Often the outputs themselves were not of an environmental nature, but rather reporting back on the work that had physically been done by the volunteers and the group.

This was all over-and-above the physical achievements of the tasks themselves which had a strong presence throughout the area. There were the sandmartin nesting banks and sound box which were mentioned previously, but as well as this, there were a number of art and environmental projects that have been undertaken, especially by the youth groups associated with CEG. Around the local library and train station there were graffiti art works and mosaic works based around environmental issues, there were areas of orchard replanting and wild meadow planting in local parks, vegetable gardening on disused land, as well as tree planting and some non-native tree removal. As a result of this myriad of impacts on the local landscape, as well as the involvement of a wide range of community members, the group had a strong presence in the area. This was one of the main reasons why the group had managed to survive and maintain funding streams over the past fifteen

years as they provided SNH with these tangible outcomes. The active and embodied form of environmental volunteering therefore takes a less apparent role within CEG, perhaps with exception of the two youth groups. The environmental framing is still there but the focus is on how best to serve the interests of those who want to get involved in the group.

7.1.4 *'Stretched-out' communities*

It is particularly apparent through looking at SFRP and EEV that there are disparate forms of community that evolve through volunteer interactions, particularly values and interests that are tied to a specific environmental ethos. This takes place in physical, distant and imagined landscapes. Both SFRP and EEV met on volunteer tasks, SFRP for a week, and EEV for Sunday or weekend tasks. The SFRP volunteers came from across the United Kingdom and overseas and, as mentioned previously, the work-week provided perhaps the only physical meeting of volunteers. Some return volunteers may meet again on a work-week or individual meetings between volunteers who have become friends may meet up over time. These interactions, although very influential to those individuals who engage in them, are in the minority. The majority of SFRP interaction after a work-week is carried out both across physically distant spaces and through imagined connections.

a) From imagined communities to local action

Once the volunteers have returned to their spatially diverse areas from an SFRP work-week they may use their experiences to take action in their local area. In the case of Derek and NSA, this was very apparent but there are many other different types of action the volunteers may take to their local areas. Erin sent the following e-mail after attending a work-week:

'I have since become involved in some regular volunteer work at home with the local BTCV office which I enjoy, although I don't think much can compare to the week we had! I have become a Volunteer Officer and am working a few days a week with various activities and different groups of people. Last week I was laying down turf alongside woodland with men with special needs, and this week I will be constructing compost bins with the general public and paying a school a visit to raise awareness of the importance of trees.'

(Erin, SFRP)

The actions taken by Erin were repeated by a number of volunteers transferring their shared interest and experiences from the work-weeks back to their local area. This transference of experience begins to help understanding of what is particularly unique to environmental volunteering. Erin, like members of NSA and FSP, is putting emphasis of the tasks conducted on both the importance of the job being carried out, and the environment where the work is being completed. She is also focusing on issues of raising broader environmental issues (recycling) and taking these topics to a wider range of people (men with special needs, general public and school visits). The uniqueness of environmental volunteering to the well-being of an individual arises from an interaction between the tasks and landscapes that the volunteering takes place, as well as the social interactions that occur around the groups. When considering this uniqueness in terms of how this feeds into community spaces, it is an environmental ethos that comes out most strongly, an ethos that spreads into wider life, not just within volunteering. This is the commonality that threads through the imagined communities of SFRP that follow a work-week. Volunteers, after having shared the experience, still maintain these emotional bonds to the week itself and to the shared values that were being reinforced with their fellow volunteers. In many cases, this also takes the form of the volunteer then getting involved in his or her own local area, perhaps initiating or engaging with more traditional and bounded forms of community, while applying his or her own underpinning beliefs.

b) The physically distanced community

As well as going from the membership of an imagined community to participating locally, SFRP volunteers also engage virtually with one another. This can be described as a physically distant form of social relation as communication is continued across distant spaces but are still connected through physical networks of fibre-optic cables and communications. To encourage this, at the end of a case study week, each volunteer would note down their e-mail address and these would be used to circulate photographs and personal feedback within the group. Volunteers were also directed to groups within social networking sites that they could join to keep up-to-date with what work the group is doing but also to share stories and photographs from their week. A volunteer website was also launched where experiences of a specific work-week could be shared and volunteers could place where they lived on a map to build up the locations that SFRP volunteers come from. The importance of these online and physically distant communities has been acknowledged by a number of geographers (Batty, 1993; Castells, 1996; Kitchin and Dodge, 2002; Rheingold, 1993) as an emerging (perhaps now emerged) geography of cyberspace. Although limiting itself to those volunteers who engage with e-mails and internet usage, these technologies have provided another space for participants to interact. This form of communication and contact builds upon the possibilities that the social networks of the group has enabled. Contact through these mediums can be sporadic and intermittent but also provide follow-up and support in a more informal and passive setting, giving the possibility of both virtual and physically proximate future meetings.

c) Physically proximate social networks

The physically proximate social networks of CEP and FSP, with the close proximity and living areas of the volunteers, were the most apparent. There were a number of pre-existing

(pre-existing to the inception of the group) friend networks that run through the groups, as well as networks that run through connections in family, neighbourhood and workplace due to the physical proximity. EEV had a slightly different group dynamic and the social networks of the group reflect this. The tasks of the group are loosely bounded within the Edinburgh and Lothians area, with the participating volunteers coming from these areas. There was no set boundary as defined as that of Southside Park or NSA meadow however. The volunteers were not from the periphery of a green space (NSA, FSP), from a small town (CEG) or spread across the UK and beyond (SFRP). Instead these volunteers lived across the region. This made it possible for them to meet up outside the volunteer tasks. This means that return volunteers often organised going out for drinks, meals, dances and other social events. These social networks were therefore built from the volunteer group and include wider friends and family who attend. Unlike other outputs from groups, but in common with other social networks in the groups, this did not have the intention of being a form of outreach and increasing visibility amongst other residents in the area. Instead, this community of return EEV volunteers were extending the social interests of members into wider life. Often these events had an environmental theme, barbeques or walks are organised in green spaces, but most commonly they were social meetings between friends who had environmental volunteering in common.

Section 7.1 has discussed the way in which volunteers interact with notions of community. This has emphasised how individuals identify with their environmental volunteering in a number of ways. These can be values that are bound in a specific place, or they can be more complex, crossing over into more blurred and ‘stretched-out’ (Miller, 1993) identifications with community that involve physical and imagined social networks and action. The ‘commonality’ (Staeheli, 2008) that volunteers identify with are built on the shared environmental values and experiences of the individuals, drawing on not only the volunteer group work, but also on how these principles feed into their everyday lives and

social networks. This is another way in which environmental volunteers exhibit and act upon their beliefs and this can empower them to feel they are making a difference through working with others towards a common goal. This informs the way in which shared environmental concern and action can help to build relationships. The next section will take this discussion further by considering how volunteers interact with different notions of citizenship.

7.2 Volunteer identifications and interactions with citizenship

This section begins by summarising some of the literatures that were discussed in Chapter 2 and highlights how the term citizenship will be used to frame discussion in the rest of this chapter. The ‘new geography of citizenship’ has highlighted that citizenship can take place on a number of different scales, not just the national. ‘Active citizenship’ was very much placed within the political sphere throughout the 1980s and 1990s and was related to moral responsibilities to care and provide for others, often through assisting in the public and welfare services (Kearns, 1992). The term ‘active communities’ was used by the New Labour Government to describe the way voluntary activity was promoted to encourage community participation (Mooney and Fyfe, 2006). This was very much influenced by the work of Putnam on social capital (Worley, 2005). As highlighted by Mooney and Fyfe (2006), however, the actions of the government did not always fit with this ‘ideal’ as there were forms of community protest and resistance that would be restricted or rebuffed by New Labour. Therefore, another model beyond these structures with politicised overtones is necessary to be able to explore environmental volunteering. It is here that the definition of ecological citizenship is used to explore where volunteers positioned themselves. Ecological citizenship includes more personal motivations to volunteer that include compassion (Dobson, 2000), individual action (Christoff, 1996) and a care for regions and ecosystems as opposed to nation-states (Thomashow, 1995). Political influence is

therefore not ignored but embraced within the limits and understanding of personal beliefs and convictions. It is the application and freedom of these personal convictions that adds another aspect to ecological citizenship compared to active citizenship.

These terms of active citizenship and ecological citizenship therefore diverge in two main ways. Firstly, active citizenship concerns itself with both the rights and responsibilities of a citizen, with an emphasis on responsibilities and service delivery. Ecological citizenship is based around a more nuanced form of responsibility, driven through compassion and personal ethics. Secondly, active citizenship is more grounded in time and place, focusing itself in local and national scales and within more restricted timescales. Ecological citizenship, on the other hand, identifies with both local and global concerns while considering longer term impacts across generational timescales. The views of the volunteers will be explored and placed in relation to these debates.

There is also an important point here in acknowledging that there is an interpretation to be carried out between the volunteer responses and the citizenship models and definitions. It is essential to acknowledge the emic and the etic from the following discussions (Pike, 1967). The volunteer responses (emic) are often not directly answering or engaging in questions around citizenship but their views do express opinion on the themes and definitions used in the literature on citizenship (etic). To understand these responses in context, the groups themselves must be considered in terms of how they connect to the models of citizenship and how bureaucratised or 'politically free' they are.

7.2.1 Individual citizenship interactions and group relations

Each of the case study groups situated themselves in slightly different ways in terms of how the volunteers interacted with the group itself and how this, in turn, impacted upon the

individual interactions with the citizenship themes and models that were discussed above. The initial motivations of the individual volunteer were strongly linked to which group they volunteer with and often these motivations can be reflected within the broader context of active and ecological citizenship. The term here that will be used is how each case study group can have 'affordances' that attract the individual.

Affordance was a term first used in this context by Gibson (1977) to describe the feature or characteristic of an object or environment that allows an individual to perform an action. Norman (1988) took this further by describing 'perceived affordances' where an individual may see potential in an object or action (in this case a group) that has been filtered through their goals, plans, ethics and past experiences. Therefore, to fulfil a motivation that corresponds with these experiential values then an individual will volunteer with a particular group and assume a role within this group. These affordances give the opportunity for the individual to express themselves and their beliefs within an environmental volunteering group in this context. It is these beliefs and underpinnings that will be used to feed into the citizenship models.

a) Structured active citizenship

One way to tease apart how the groups operate is to understand how much perceived freedom the group has to perform tasks that fit with the volunteer identifications. Amongst the FSP volunteers, there was a clear desire to interact with and influence the local area and park. This often linked with a model of active citizenship whereby the volunteers were situating themselves as actors of change within the group and also as an influence on the wider local community. They could also see the affordances within the group and how these could fulfil this influence:

'I do take a stronger role in the organisation of the group. I'm at all the meetings and I help out with the council, check the funding applications, everything really. I like to be at the centre of things and get stuff done, I wouldn't be happy if I didn't know everything that was going on. I'm good at that as well, not to be big headed, I can do this better than other people and I enjoy it.'

(Hannah, FSP)

'May: I compare it to voting in an election. If you don't vote then you don't deserve to criticise decisions that are made. I volunteer and I give my time and that gives me the right to be critical of things that are going on around me. I'll write to my local MP, bring up things I don't like, tell someone to clean up after their dog – I hate that!

Interviewer: Do you feel more comfortable doing this because of your work with FSP?

May: Absolutely. I know issues that are going on in the area and I like to think I can have a say. It gives me confidence in these situations and... you know... actions are louder than words, I take action to change things in my area.'

(May, FSP)

The idea of local action is one that volunteers positioned within the active citizenship frame of having both rights and responsibilities. The rights of influence and opinion come with the responsibility of involvement and action. Also, a feeling of empowerment comes from these interactions. The involvement and confidence that can come from being more intrinsically linked into the decision-making process can give this stronger sense of what can be achieved but it can also work in other ways. As shown by May and Hannah in the above quotations, volunteers position themselves within the groups in a way that fits with their desires and beliefs. Volunteers who want to become more involved in these aspects take a stronger interest in attending committee meetings to steer the group in the direction that they feel is most appropriate. These desires take root in how they see themselves being able to influence change on an individual level. This individual action is, through the volunteering organisations, taken to a group action level. The involvement and influence

may then be exerted by the volunteer as part of a personal and individual action (such as a letter to an MP) or it may be carried out under the umbrella of the group (liaising with council representatives).

Within CEG, the motivation to get involved with the group in the first place often came from a desire to become more empowered:

'Delia: Meeting new people was part of it but I walk my dogs down the front every day and I'd see things happening that I didn't like and wanted to know more about it and see what I could do to change it.'

Interviewer: What sort of things do you mean?

Delia: Em... the best example is probably the housing developments, a while back now, you know the ones near the reserve?... I wanted to know what consideration had been taken when those were put up. Who was asking the questions? Anyway, that was part of getting involved.'

(Delia, CEG)

Delia clearly wanted to learn more about the space she was using on a daily basis and she also wanted to have a say in how this space was managed. Again, linking with the previous quotations, this has a number of aspects. It covers involvement, knowledge, influence, empowerment and ownership. Delia was asked whether she viewed her daily usage as a right to ownership of the green spaces and open spaces that she used:

'I'd say I did feel an ownership of it because I cared about these places but I feel a stronger ownership now. Ownership is quite a strong term actually, maybe I wouldn't use that... erm... involvement perhaps... I do feel a right to influence what goes on there now, more so now I am more switched on to how things work here.'

(Delia, CEG)

Presence in, and usage of, these green spaces did influence Delia's feeling of having a say in how these areas are utilised and managed. This feeling of empowerment was enhanced, however, after having joined CEG. The empowerment from group action and taking a personal responsibility to volunteer was central to this. In Delia's case, which represents a number of volunteer encounters, her group work helped her gain knowledge and increase her confidence in getting involved with local decision making. This link to empowerment within the community, and of the community, strongly reflects the argument of building social capital within New Labour's active communities. It is those volunteers who *want* to engage with this side of environmental volunteering that are most prominent here.

It was at this local level that most politicised action was apparent, to the volunteers and to me. Within FSP, the group was borne out of collaboration between the city council and local residents (as described in Chapter 6). The level of partnership and the restrictions placed on the volunteers as a result of this were therefore quite apparent. Those return volunteers, mainly the committee members, were used to including the council within their discussions and their subsequent actions within the park. Issues such as park rules and council guidelines were prominent in their minds. There was also an awareness of working on council land and fulfilling responsibilities that used to be carried out by the park rangers:

'I remember when the park rangers actually used to 'range'! Now they are based over in another park and you don't see them in Southside Park so much. We (the volunteers) are the ones keeping an eye on it and then reporting back to the council. We still need both permission and help to actually do a lot of things though.'

(Justin, FSP field diary)

Within CEG, the awareness and need for a more structured and bureaucratic approach was largely borne through three things. Firstly, there was a part-time paid member of staff who chaired the committee meetings and was the driving force behind a lot of the group's projects and tasks. It was through this individual and her past experience working for Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) that there was a strong knowledge amongst the volunteers about the politics of the group and how it had to be run. Secondly, and linking to the first point, the main funding stream for the group was from SNH. The stipulations for this funding from SNH meant the group has to work within certain task boundaries and this was the responsibility of both the part-time worker and also the committee. As discussed in Chapter, 4, however, CEG would usually find 'imaginative ways' to use the funding for different projects that did not quite fit the SNH criteria if they deemed it necessary. Also, due to the myriad of tasks and projects being carried out under the umbrella of CEG at any one time amongst the community, other funding applications and discussions with landowners and other concerned parties was constantly underway.

Those members of the groups who were active on the committees and within the structures and organisation of the volunteer groups also expressed most desire to be involved in other local political considerations.

b) The complexities of citizenship associations

Eastern Environmental Volunteers (EEV) were a group that mainly operated on tasks with return volunteers. These volunteers, in the majority, were either past or present committee members who had a formal role within the group, although there were others who became involved. The work of the group was possible through close collaboration and relationships that had been built with landowners around Edinburgh and the Lothians. This involved the group carrying out environmental volunteering tasks over a number of years on both public

and private land. Through this relationship a number of the EEV volunteers would take pride in the freedom that they were given by landowners to make their own decisions over how to carry out tasks. This gave them a greater autonomy than CEG who were tied more closely to their SNH funding. Indeed, EEV had the power and ability to turn down requests from landowners to carry out volunteering work on their land. These tasks could very much be seen as service provision to the landowner, although again, the volunteers do not view their work in that way:

'We do provide a service I suppose... although often it is to private landowners who we know, it isn't always big ones like RSPB. I'm pretty sure none of us would do it if we didn't believe in it. We wouldn't do tasks just because we are asked – we do pick and choose to see what fits best. They might not always be the glamorous tasks but they're all for a good reason.'

(Christine, EEV focus group)

Christine is reinforcing one of the added attributes of ecological citizenship by emphasising that the tasks she undertakes are ones that she believes in. This can empower both the individuals and the group itself. Individual responses reflect that volunteers attribute different meanings to tasks that could erroneously be viewed solely within the boundaries of active citizenship (when only considering literature definitions without fully understanding underlying ethics and motivations). Members of EEV therefore pick and choose what associations they want to have with landowners and collaborations they want to proceed with. These feelings are associated with the return volunteers in particular as it is they who shape the task directions that the group takes. This also helps to garner this feeling of freedom and responsibility that would not always be felt so strongly in a volunteer who only volunteers on one or very few occasions. Again, this choice can be a part of whether the volunteers want to engage with these group politics. In the case of

NSA, their political involvement was central to both their volunteering and their underpinning beliefs.

c) Politicised and activist engagement

It is not always the case that volunteers set out to be involved on a wider political level in the areas in which they carry out their work. To examine this issue, the situation and background of NSA will be outlined. The group began when Derek (an SFRP volunteer) returned to his local area and wanted to take action on environmental issues where he lived. Across from his tenement flat was an area of ground, once used as football pitches and tennis courts, which had been reclaimed by plants and animals. He viewed this space as having the potential to be a very attractive and lively green community area. With this belief he organised a clean-up of the area, and following on from this a number of volunteers have installed raised vegetable beds, erected bat and bird boxes, cleaned out a disused building to store tools and materials, as well as having organised a number of bulb plantings and local community fun days. Derek, and fellow volunteers, have since become involved in a political, ethical and legal struggle over the usage of this space.

Although having been disused for around 30 years, the space is still owned by the local council. The council had taken the decision to sell the land so that over 100 flats could be built in the space. NSA, in particular Derek and Ashling (the group treasurer), claimed that the local residents were not fully consulted on this (as mentioned previously). They argued that the residents would prefer the land to be used as a community green space. This resulted in them being taken to court by the council and ordered to desist putting any more 'structures' on the land or holding any more volunteer events there. The story had attracted media attention for the group, as well as on wider green space issues and land ownership legalities. As a result of this contestation, Derek and Ashling, with support from other

volunteers on the land, had to become much more aware of, and engaged with, the local political landscape. This had been necessary for both their legal and media dealings, involving themselves in areas with which they would not normally choose to connect:

'It has been pretty nerve wracking. I don't think we had a choice though. I feel we speak for the people on this one and I don't want to get bullied by the council. We will take it as far as we can but I still only give us maybe a 10% chance of winning. All we want is a community garden, a green space for people to use, maybe some allotments – I think that's more important than more flats. I think it's my right to stand up for that.'

(Derek, NSA)

In Derek's case, his political engagement was initiated through his belief in the importance of having a community green space. He had invested a lot of time and effort into holding volunteer events on this space and clearly felt an ownership and responsibility for how this land is going to be developed. He even went as far as seeing it as his 'right' to take this standpoint. He was taking the idea of what he believes local people want and their activity on the land as justification for this. Although taken to a more extreme extent, this is similar to volunteer experiences of both CEG and FSP. An activeness and involvement in spaces result in the volunteers engaging more readily with wider issues but also feeling they have the justification to do this. Therefore, through their volunteer work they feel they have earned the right to have their say and to try to exert change or influence if need be. This fits into the definition of active citizenship and how the 'activeness' of individuals may influence their status as citizens and empower them as individuals. However, political forms of citizenship relating to a person's relationship to an overarching political body (Painter and Philo, 1995) are to be distinguished from socio-cultural forms of citizenship linking to questions of an individual's everyday participation/being in a community. It is more likely to be this everyday participation form of citizenship that takes place amongst the volunteers, perhaps more closely related to New Labour's active communities.

However, socio-cultural forms of citizenship and everyday associations with collaborations and other inter-group relationships can more readily be identifiable with the case study groups. This suggests that these interactions take place as part of an individual volunteer's goals, not as a goal in themselves. This participation has been discussed on a local level but there has been considerable references so far suggesting a wider purpose from the two groups that have not yet been discussed.

d) Organisational disagreement

SFRP was formed in the early eighties by one man with a vision to help to restore and regenerate the ancient Caledonian Forest in the Highlands of Scotland. The operation began as an offshoot from a spiritual community and ethos that the founder was involved in. The main offices for SFRP were still based within this community. As the group had gained a higher profile and a higher number of volunteers were wanting to take part in work-weeks, a number of ethical tensions had started to develop. Unlike the other groups, SFRP volunteers would generally express themselves directly within a more ecologically focussed form of citizenship. There was a more direct link made by the volunteers themselves between their volunteering and how this not only related to the land and space that they are working in, but also how this relates to global environmental efforts and impacts this will have into the future. The ethical standpoint taken by many of the volunteers was much more pronounced, an affordance provided by a combination between the group's inception and the way the volunteer work-weeks were presented and undertaken which attracts volunteers seeking this experience. Even within this group, however, there were debates around what was the correct way forward.

There was tension amongst those in the organisation, involving both leaders and volunteers, over the direction the group should take. Staying true to the original ethos of

the group, involves volunteer work helping the land, but also encouraging a spiritual connection with oneself and others. However, in recent years the group had pledged to plant a minimum amount of trees towards the United Nations Environment Programme's *Billion Tree Campaign*. This appeared to fit in well with SFRP and their volunteers but Evelyn felt that this was not in the SFRP spirit:

'I don't think we should be putting a pressure on ourselves to get as many in the ground as possible. We are hitting this target easy enough but I think they are going to up it in the next few years. I don't want to feel like a robot out there.'

(Evelyn, SFRP)

It was even suggested by doing this that the quality of the work may be lost:

'We have a success rate of about 80% of our trees, I think the Forestry Commission is about 50% or thereabouts. That's because we take our time and plant in the best areas, we attune to the land and take care, we don't just bang them in.'

(Alan, SFRP)

As mentioned before, the FCS did carry out tree planting in these areas as well but Alan argued that success rates of trees surviving are reduced when care is not taken. There are also tensions over how the group was advertised and conflict concerning the size and infrastructure of the organisation. For example, some members would have liked to see an advertising campaign initiated that would make use of wider forms of media. These aspects were viewed by some as necessary for improvement and expansion, but for others this went against the original ethos of the group's purpose. They viewed the group within their own ethical underpinnings and this is where the idea of an ethical citizenship plays out. Their volunteering makes both a practical and physical impact in the areas that they work in and contributes positively to the local and global environment. However, the idea of it

being a spiritual act, of being a good thing to do in itself, was central to many of the SFRP volunteers. The process of the volunteering was just as important as the outcome:

'It is not just about the final numbers of the volunteers or trees planted, there has to be a quality to the experience. There is no use in just packing people in I don't think... I think it would lose a bit of the magic.'

(Evelyn, SFRP)

Their ethical beliefs must match into the volunteer organisation's ethos, otherwise these tensions can arise. Ownership of the volunteering must still be theirs and this appears to be a fundamental reason for a number of volunteers rejecting an understanding of their volunteering under what could be seen as someone else's definition of citizenship. The meaning and control of the volunteering must be within the individual's control. It is here that the politicised version of active citizens introduced by the Conservative Government in the 1980s meets its strongest opposition. There was a firm focus within SFRP on individual expression, and politically imposed or implied moral guidelines were resisted as part of this by many of the volunteers. This is, therefore, where a more nuanced approach of citizenship is needed that can be better understood within the ecological citizenship model.

e) National identity within SFRP

This section began by mentioning the traditional idea of citizenship as being linked to national identity and membership within a polity. Friedmann (1989), Littleton (1996) and Valentine (2001) have questioned whether there is still a space for national identity and belonging amongst these more local and global identities that volunteers have associated with above. This sense of a national citizenship, and how it manifested itself within their environmental volunteering, only showed to any great extent within SFRP volunteers,

especially amongst those volunteers whose motivations to volunteer for SFRP was to see more of Scotland and to restore the ancient Caledonian Forest. Amongst these volunteers, the attachment to place was felt through a national identity, not just a local or global one:

'It does matter to me that I am doing this (environmental volunteering) in Scotland. I'm not sure what it is. Maybe it is the landscape that we work in... I am proud to be Scottish. I almost feel silly saying it but it wouldn't be the same if I was down in the Lake District or somewhere like that. I care more about what goes on here.'

(Davis, SFRP)

'Tourists come to Scotland for the landscape and the Highlands and I do feel like it is a bit of a swizz. The whole of this area has been managed and changed and isn't natural anymore and that's how it is sold. I feel that putting the forest back is a way of redressing this, even though it is more human intervention, I feel it is the correct intervention. I hope it is anyway... I like hearing Scottish accents on the weeks, people taking responsibility in their own country, it is sometimes more fashionable to go off abroad doing these things.'

(Danielle, SFRP)

As illustrated by Davis and Danielle, their environmental restoration ethic is being used within their Scottish identity. This illustrates that national identity can still have a place among some of the motivations and associations an individual has to participate in environmental volunteering. This contributes to the complexities of how volunteers view themselves and their work. The emotional attachment that is alluded to here, however, is not one of citizenship practice. It is an attachment and feeling of belonging to land, possibly separate from a civil or political responsibility.

This is further complicated by the fact that if these SFRP volunteers were not planting these native trees to help towards re-planting the Caledonian Forest, then the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) would undertake the task. FCS already does carry out this

work, but without the SFRP volunteers this would take a much longer period of time. Consequently, although the SFRP volunteers would not frame or consider their volunteering within the framework of being active citizens, this very much fits into Kearns (1992) definition of one aspect of active citizenship. This is characterised as the state expecting citizens to volunteer time and expertise to run operations previously staffed by local governments. Individuals expressed, through their identifications with different aspects of volunteering, that a local and global sense of citizenship was most significant to them. As a result, the volunteers may not want to position their national feelings of identity under an association with civic duties and responsibilities. Again, the freedom of the expression and subsequent individual actions are what the volunteers' value.

7.2.2 Empowerment, ethics and scalar associations with citizenship

This section examines the intersecting themes that arise across the case study groups in relation to citizenship. These include feelings of being able to make a difference and build individual confidence, but also the opposite sensation of futility. Following this, the ethics that underpin associations with ecological citizenship are discussed. There is also a theme of scale that crosses over the groups and is mirrored in an understanding of ecological citizenship.

a) Empowerment and futility

Feelings of empowerment that were expressed through participation, confidence building, influence and ownership were explored and have been discussed in relation to a number of the groups. These feelings seemed to be most apparent within those groups where the volunteering took place in the same areas over time, building up an attachment to the space and to others in that community. These have already been discussed in terms of FSP and

CEG earlier on in the chapter. Empowerment could also be gained through other means. Within SFRP this was often described as ‘making a contribution’ (Ed, SFRP) but it also involved building self-belief in social situations, especially within a group of people that have not met before:

‘I think I was quiet to start with but I quickly realised I had to speak up! I think everyone on this week are strong personalities and I realised I better make myself heard. Now (nearing the end of the week) I feel like it has really given me a boost... a confidence boost.’

(Theresa, SFRP)

This empowerment was therefore not always related to a community action or indeed environmental tasks but also to social bonding and building social capital.

As discussed previously, many volunteers also felt that working as part of a group helped increase influence, through providing a louder voice, offering support and reducing feelings of futility. These feelings of futility and powerlessness still came out, though, and would often be impacted on by particular events or experiences, creating an air of pessimism for some:

‘it’s often an uphill battle to get things done and you don’t always get much thanks. It can get me down that I have to clean up graffiti again and again or that we don’t get more volunteers along. Silly in-fighting in the group annoys me as well, you know, stupid differences. It does annoy me, have you noticed... The language of ‘my side of the park’, that really bugs me sometimes.’

(Justin, FSP)

‘I got into an argument with a guy down the street, just your local punter, about where the hedge was going to be cut to. We were trimming it away from the path so people could

actually walk by! I mean, bloody hell, it's idiots like that that make me wonder why I bother.'

(Irvine, CEG)

'I mean, the council has all these initiatives and then we come along and they prosecute us. It doesn't make sense and it I did think about walking away, I nearly had to because I didn't feel like I understood what was going on.'

(Derek, NSA)

In some cases the volunteering could elicit these feelings of futility concerning the cause that the individuals were working toward. As volunteer work is freely chosen, volunteers anticipate gaining from it and expect to make a difference (Wuthnow, 1995) and if this does not happen they can become disillusioned (Wilson and Musick, 1999). This could be cumulative, where the frustrations were through the tasks that had to be performed again and again due to the perceived negative actions of others. In Justin's case this was graffiti removal but the same frustration was also felt around similar tasks such as litter picking. These feelings seemed to be at their strongest when it involved others hindering the volunteering. This was either on an individual or group level. Irvine was exasperated at the questioning and disagreement from a passer by when he was trimming hedges in the local park. Irvine viewed himself as contributing to something positive and was aggrieved when this was not understood or appreciated by the individual. This is also explicitly seen when the group receives opposition from public authorities, as is the case with the NSA and their dealings with the local council. This emphasises the importance of collaboration and dealing with the 'controversial issues' within Thomashow's definition of ecological citizenship. In other words, these aspects of environmental volunteering cannot be ignored but they must also be kept in balance with the positive impacts of the volunteering. Neither can the importance of ethics to an individual's environmental volunteering experience.

b) Ethics underpinning ecological citizenship

The citizenship taking place was not solely that of a global and active citizenship. There was an ethical citizenship involved that emphasised the belief that something was right to do as an act in itself and not as part of a wider agenda. A possible explanation for this was given by Sheena in reference to her viewpoint:

'We are just here for a short time, people I mean. Political agendas change and move on as well, I hate all of that. I don't care about what some politician wants me to do to be a good person, I do what I feel is right. I feel attached to nature and...em. (pause) That's mine, I don't want a pat on the back for it. It isn't something that should need that, it should just be a thing you do.'

(Sheena, FSP)

In a conversation with SFRP volunteer Alan, the phrase 'if I should die tomorrow, I would plant a tree today' was raised. Going beyond a simple understanding of planting a tree as an act of responsibility and global stewardship, Alan described it as something that was in itself a good thing, without it having to be directly related to the environment. In Buddhist and Islamic teachings Alan explained that the tree can be seen as a metaphor for other acts of good – as a thing of good in itself even if there were no other outcomes. In his interview he expanded further:

'Alan: I plant trees back home and I have started to do it up here (for SFRP). I do it where I can but it isn't just about the whole climate change issue. I might have said this before...

Interviewer: No, em, explain it again if you like?

Alan: ...em... I think it is a good thing just to do it, for you and for life. It's hard to explain, I don't just mean animals and plants and all that, I think it has a core good about it, like

helping an old lady over the road. It is a solidly good deed, it doesn't need any more additions.'

(Alan, SFRP)

The ownership of their volunteering is intrinsically linked to both Sheena and Alan's ethical beliefs and clearly not something that, especially Sheena, wants tainted with an association to a political agenda. Responsibility and engagement are clearly part of their involvement with how they view their volunteering but their ethical beliefs supersede these notions. Sheena's view of not wanting her motivations to be associated with a political agenda is one that can be reflected in the groups themselves. For others, this view is more related to a wider, global citizenship.

c) Thinking across scales

As shown by the initial motivations in Chapter 5, global environmental concern was a prominent starting point for many individuals across the groups to become involved in environmental volunteering. Amongst volunteers, the link between conducting their volunteer work on a local scale, whilst also contributing to a global agenda was often present:

'I would definitely see myself as more of a global citizen than attached to New Zealand or anything like that. I don't really see the point in being as...em... focused in... maybe... as that. Action is needed at a wider scale than what I could just do in my small corner of the globe and everyone needs to play their part'

(Frank, SFRP)

For those volunteers who were volunteering in a particularly local area, the resonance of their activities to a wider global community was expressed. When asked about identifying with particular local, national or global issues, Hannah responded:

'Hannah: We do our bit in the park but I do think about the wider issues and I do engage with them... but you can't do it all. Environmental stories in the paper and on the news are ones that I feel more of a connection with and I do sympathise with those struggles.'

Interviewer: What struggles do you mean?

Hannah: Em... land use struggles over use of resources, things like over-exploitation of land. Not just for resources though but also for native people. I can get angry about those types of thing. I can even see how on our patch these same things come up... people and environment don't always work together.'

(Hannah, FSP)

The idea of local action, while considering the wider impacts on a global scale, is reflected here. Again, when asked why global concerns and identifying with these struggles was important to them a number of participants revisited the idea of responsibility and stewardship for the environment. Whether this involved volunteering at a local level or travelling to volunteer in distant places, the connections to wider feelings of sympathy and belonging were still there:

'If everybody looked after their own patch then we'd be fine. I know that's a bit idealistic but that's how I see it. We're all on this planet together and if it begins to go wrong then it'll go wrong for all of us. I think the shit will hit the fan at some point, and if it does I'll be one of the people helping clean it up.'

(Larry, SFRP)

This local care, while relating to global environmental concern, was something that the volunteers were happier to associate themselves with than an association with a state-based model of active citizenship. The idea of volunteering, particularly volunteering in an environmental sense, was seen by participants as something that transcended state-based citizenship responsibility. A wider influence was apparent here:

'I do it for my own reasons, not because I feel I have to. I do feel guilt but it is a collective guilt that we abuse how we live, and I'm no angel here and I don't preach. I don't get involved in the politics of all this stuff, even within the group. I do this for something bigger than all that crap.'

(Zanda, EEV)

There is a personal attachment to environmental volunteering that is problematised by associations with political and state involvement. As Zanda maintains, there is an ethical rooting in his beliefs, the idea of something 'bigger'. Thomashow's definition of ecological citizenship encompasses both these scalar associations that volunteers make, as well as the ethical underpinnings that reinforce them.

7.3 Community and citizenship conclusions

This chapter has particularly dealt with research question three, investigating emotional well-being and nature relations at both an individual and community level. Across the groups there are themes of commonality with their roots in environmental volunteering. The social networks that build as a result of volunteering within the groups help shape both the volunteer experience within the task but also feed into influencing wider life. The uniqueness of environmental volunteering is highlighted by how the volunteers put emphasis on a general environmental ethos, not just focusing on solely an active environmental task. This is reflected in how they position themselves within their own

definition of community. A number of the groups view community through involving those people that they see as local residents. This can be achieved through having new volunteers coming along to tasks, by involving local people in expressing their views at committee meetings or making them aware of local environmental issues through events or other visible outputs. This understanding of community can involve seeing an area as particularly bounded within space and can sometimes provide areas for exclusion as well as inclusion across boundaries or within spaces. There are also forms of Miller's (1993) 'stretched-out' communities working across the groups in more unbounded and diverse ways that can be imagined, physically distant or physically proximate. It is often these understandings of community that are unexpected outcomes for the groups. It may even be that these outcomes are not acknowledged as community outcomes at all. However, it is within these complex social interactions that work across individuals, groups, spaces and activities that the breadth of understanding community relations within environmental volunteering is particularly useful. The use of the term community has therefore revealed itself to be a way of thinking about the volunteering that assists in understanding where social connections and crossovers can be engendered by, and through, the environmental volunteer groups.

There are aspects of active citizenship that have been used here that would quite readily *describe* what the volunteers are doing. There are clearly associations still made between rights and responsibilities and the links that volunteers make to the relationships between the two. Nevertheless, it is the underlying motivations and ethical and moral underpinning that begins to make ecological citizenship perhaps a more reliable model to use in relation to volunteer associations with citizenship. To revisit Thomashow's definition:

'the ecologically aware citizen takes responsibility for the place where he or she lives, understands the importance of making collective decisions regarding the commons, seeks to contribute to the common good, identifies with bioregions and ecosystems rather than obsolete nation-states or transnational corporations, considers the wider impact of his or her actions, is committed to mutual and collaborative community building, observes the flow of power in controversial issues, attends to the quality of interpersonal relationships in political discourse, and acts according to his or her convictions'

(Thomashow, 1995: 13)

Although there are variances that have been discussed between the groups, each of the themes described in the quotation above have been expressed by the volunteers: responsibility and stewardship were described as motivators; local and global concerns and interactions were considered; only one group had expressions of a national identity as a driver within their volunteering and each group dealt with collaborations and issues when necessary. To add to this, Dobson's (2000) definition that deals with 'compassion' and underling ethical motivations for volunteering was also reflected in the volunteer responses.

Clearly, each group does provide some form of service provision, be it through doing a job that another public organisation would normally deliver or working on public land to better it in some way. This undeniably links with Kearns' (1992) definition of active citizenship as providing 'public and welfare services'. What this does miss, however, are these compassionate and ethical motivations that work across scales. This is apparent when considering the participants own accounts and their rejection of politicised motivations and attachments. The 'affordances' of the groups that the volunteers perceived as being able to fulfil their beliefs and aspirations were not related to these political undertones, and when considering their volunteering in this way it would restrict their feelings of freedom and

individuality. To take this further, if the volunteers felt that their work was being ineffective then they could become disillusioned and demotivated. This can link to feelings of burn-out but it happens in a different way, with a volunteer not feeling that their contribution is making a difference. Active citizenship should not be completely rejected as a way of understanding the service that the volunteers provide and looking at a number of the outcomes, but neither should it be used to explain how the volunteers view their work. Ecological citizenship has a more nuanced approach that fits more closely with the ethical and local/global dimensions of environmental volunteering.

Chapter 8: Well-being in Environmental Volunteering

This chapter will use Collins and Kearns' (2007) five ways in which beaches, as spaces of potential therapeutic landscape experience, can enhance well-being. These include:

- an enhanced degree of physical or psychological removal from the everyday,
- an opportunity to be closer to natural environments,
- a space that provides opportunities for both solitude and social activity,
- ways of shaping collective and social identity
- the ability to exercise and carry out physical activity in these spaces.

These first four ways are drawn from Conradson (2005b) and his work on therapeutic landscape experiences. These aspects and issues around individual and group well-being will be used to shape and illustrate this chapter. The first of these is Section 8.1 on physical well-being. This will build on the growing discussions in the literature relating to the physical benefits of exercise in the natural outdoors and the relationship this has with psychological well-being (Cooper *et al.*, 1999; Pretty *et al.*, 2005; Hartig, 2008). This will then go on to draw on aspects of embodiment. Embodiment is a concept that assumes the experiences of the individual are shaped by the active and reactive entity that is their body (Parr, 2005). This 'fleshy reality' (Hall, 2000) will be used to frame the multi-sensory experience of the environmental volunteering. This initial frame of physical well-being will be used to understand the importance that volunteers place in the physicality of tasks and how they experience them through the very presence of their bodies in the landscape and task. This physical well-being can be closely linked to an emotional well-being.

Emotional geography is concerned with the association between feelings themselves and the representations and accounts of these feelings that are experienced through the body and within particular spaces (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). Section 8.2 looks at spiritual and emotional well-being. The short term experience of an emotion or emotions can have a cumulative affect on well-being. In this sense, well-being can be viewed as the long term wellness of an individual, an underlying sense of being and *feeling* well or unwell. Therefore, through the physical tasks, an emotional response is experienced and expressed by the volunteer. A positive emotional response is often linked to the space where the volunteering takes place. Using spiritual and emotional well-being as a second frame for well-being, volunteer experiences will be explored, illustrating particular aspects of well-being that are being experienced by the volunteers.

Section 8.3 explores a social and shared notion of well-being (Pain and Smith, 2010). It has been found that group volunteering activity can bring improved levels of social capital, whilst developing personal and communication skills (Maller *et al.*, 2002). Townsend (2006) goes on to emphasise the importance of not only being in nature and making friends and community connections, but also the significance of reaching a sense of achievement and shared pleasure in the work that is done and making a positive contribution to human society. This form of social well-being, through the actions of volunteer activity, is one that will be illustrated in this chapter. Forms of collective group identity, group resilience and issues over contested spaces will also be explored.

Section 8.4 will use therapeutic landscape literature to guide linkages between the volunteering landscape and the other forms of physical, emotional and social well-being. A number of authors have written about the term ‘therapeutic landscape’ and the benefits of these spaces and places to mental well-being (Gesler, 1992; Williams, 1999; Kearns and Moon, 2002; Conradson, 2005a). This builds on the idea that certain environments are in

themselves beneficial to an individual and their well-being. This linkage is not always as straightforward, however and there is often ‘a need for a skill or artistry in our engagements with place’ (Thrift, 1998: 310-311).

The connection between volunteer actions in a local place and how this links with their wider place in the world has been discussed in previous chapters. This connection, in relation to environmental volunteering, can be used to help frame the well-being that individuals feel through their actions. The nature of the case study groups were such that they involved physically active tasks that were carried out and embodied within a green space, as well as other tasks involved in the running of the group.

Clearly the aspects of well-being that frame this chapter are interconnected with blurred boundaries between physical, emotional and social well-being. Each one of these has connections and relations to the other. These connections will go towards illustrating the particular characteristics of environmental volunteering that have overall effects on well-being. As part of this, both positive and negative aspects of well-being will be discussed in an attempt to encompass the complex nature of volunteer experience.

8.1 Physical well-being

8.1.1 Physical activity, fitness and well-being

The physical experience of active environmental volunteering was predominantly a positive one. Derren’s account of his volunteering focused strongly on how he related his well-being to the physicality that he invested in both his volunteer work and his job as a gardener. He was a first time focaliser (group leader) on an SFRP work-week and it is both

observations and interactions with him on this week that the following accounts stem from.

He had volunteered previously on another four weeks but was on his first as a focaliser:

'For all of day four we continued working on rhododendron removal in the same area as the day before... I worked most closely with Derren, the two of us spending the majority of the time piling the rhododendron roots and branches off the ground so that they could not take root again in the soil. This aspect of the task was probably even more physical than the removal of the rhodies themselves as we were piling constantly - receiving branches and roots from the four or five pairs of volunteers at once. For the majority of the time we just spoke about the task and the piling, in between sweating and the odd grunt when lifting a heavy branch. However, after lunch we began a discussion on sport, mainly due to us both being from the west of Scotland and having an interest in football. This led to me asking him if he played any sports. He answered that his job was enough to keep him fit and that it made him feel better and stronger from doing a task as opposed to doing a sport. I found it interesting that as soon as I spoke about him doing sports he immediately referred to fitness and strength.'

(SFRP field diary)

Figure 8.1: Derren working on top of the rhododendron pile.



Source: Author's photograph.

In the photograph, above, Derren is in the middle of the task that was described in the ethnographic diary excerpt. He is balancing a metre or two from the ground on top of unstable branches, continuing to lift and add to the pile. His fleece jacket sleeves are rolled up, the zip is undone and his hard hat has been discarded. He is exhibiting here, not only his physical enjoyment and involvement in the task, but also reflecting the frustration that some of the volunteers associated with inadequate and/or frustrating safety gear in Chapter 6. He has his gloves and safety goggles on, but he described the hard hat as ‘worse than useless’, meaning that it gets in his way and falls off. After working with Derren for a number of days I found an opportunity to interview him on our final evening on the work-week to talk to him further about his SFRP experience. His response to the path he had taken through the group, from volunteer to focaliser, was one that surprised him, and also one that he links to the physicality of the tasks:

‘It definitely wasn’t my intention to get involved in leading a group, I suppose I didn’t really see myself as that type of person... one to help run things. I guess I get stuck in and am pretty enthusiastic which helps...My job involves a lot of lifting and handling and keeps me fit-ish. When I first came on one of these weeks, the attraction was doing a similar thing but up here {in the Highlands}. I saw it as an enjoyable extension of my job... I had been short on work so thought I could do this to keep myself going. I’m glad that we’ve had a fit and eager group this week and have managed to get stuck into the rhodie bashing.’

(Derren, SFRP)

Like Derren’s explanation, the majority of responses to the physicality of the active volunteering tasks were ones of enjoyment, either of the challenge of the physicality or of the benefits of the exercise itself. Volunteers would most often associate the task with an increase in the fitness of their bodies, of doing something that is ‘good’ for them. This was not always the case however. In some instances a volunteer could view the physicality of the volunteering as being something that excluded them or made them feel like an outsider:

'I do feel that I can't keep up with everyone else and that I am holding people back. No-one ever says anything but I know I can slow people down. I get frustrated as well because I don't like people feeling obliged to stop and wait for me but if we are walking up a hill and the group has to stay together then they have no choice. If I can avoid that type of task, or ones that involve a lot of walking to get to a location, then I will.'

(Janet, SFRP)

Although the exercise itself may be good for Janet's physical fitness her 'personal disposition' (Kearns and Andrews, 2010) to this physical aspect of the group work has negative connotations for her, making her feel distanced from other group members. This idea of personal disposition is one that resonates through many themes of well-being. What one individual views as a positive benefit may hold negative impacts for another. The physicality of some tasks may be beyond either the capability or the comfort level of a volunteer's fitness.

Indeed, there were often feelings of ambivalence towards the physicality of volunteering tasks. Often these interactions provide not only one sense of that experience, but an ambivalent outlook. Within a number of the accounts of volunteer experiences the positive views towards the physical involvement would contain an element of negativity, be it through a singular experience or a particular element of a task. Janet, in this instance, clearly does not enjoy any physical task that she feels is beyond her capabilities. There are more subtle accounts however and these will be discussed in the following section.

8.1.2 Embodiment and multi-sensory experiences

As in previous chapters the idea of embodiment and a multi-sensory experience in environmental volunteering is central to well-being. The term in itself implies the placement of an individual in a particular place: 'human existence is only possible through

‘being’ in the world... Wellbeing also suggests being somewhere’ (Kearns and Andrews, 2010: 309). This idea of well-being involving a physical presence in place is reflected by the significance volunteers place in the *how* and *where* of tasks.

In Chapter 6 on the importance of task and landscape, the embodiment of the task was a strong influence on the volunteer experience. The physical connection with nature and the land was given special significance. Physically strenuous and ‘destructive’ tasks would often be ones that volunteers would use and enjoy through cathartic release. As opposed to looking at an individual emotional response that can be a passing one of happiness or pain, well-being is concerned with a longer term response, a cumulative and sustained feeling, and it is this response that will be looked at here. These emotional responses have a cumulative effect that impact well-being but, so as not to repeat Chapter 6, the focus here will be on what the volunteers viewed as a longer term effect of their embodiment and sensory experiences. An improvement in well-being has been attributed to escaping the pressures of modern living and gaining a connection to the plants and earth in the form of multi-sensory stimulation and a very embodied interaction with the natural surroundings (Edensor, 2000). It is this lasting connection, linking to the volunteering experience, which Rhona elaborated on:

‘Rhona: I could really feel as if I could drink the place in today. We got completely soaked but I quite enjoyed that. I just couldn’t believe that I was actually out there in the elements. It’s those things that you remember, that was the best part of the week so far. I felt like I was completely exposed, feeling the rain, listening to it all around me... it was just me out there and that had been the first time I had been like that in a long time.’

Interviewer: How did that feel?

Rhona: Great... really great. I came up to Scotland when I was younger and I felt that freedom again. I hadn’t know I’d missed it so much.’

(Rhona, SFRP)

'I could see Rhona further up the hill. She was just standing there and looking out over the glen. The rest of the group was further up the hill and heading back to the mini-bus and Rhona and I were the only two left out on the task. I watched her for a number of minutes as I continued removing small non-native trees. She didn't seem to be affected by the pouring rain, or if she was, she seemed to be enjoying it.'

(SFRP field diary)

Rhona speaks of the exposure she felt when she was out in the rain, and of the solitude that brought to her. She had been nervous about coming on the work-week and was surprised to find how much she enjoyed working outdoors over the week and it brought back feelings and memories of experiences when she was younger, ones that she had missed. In some cases, the feelings that are experienced in relation to this embodied experience can also be negative:

'It was cold most of that day and we were using spades and working in mud. I don't often get miserable but, em, I was then. That has been my only bad experience I think...It was like being back in school and having to do those God-awful assault course things in the winter. I know I could head back home but I didn't want to be the only one.'

(Lydia, FSP)

Lydia clearly felt an obligation and pressure to stay out on this volunteer task, even though she felt uncomfortable, relating the experience to a forced and unpleasant memory. It was a combination of the weather, the physicality and conditions of the task and the feelings of needing to stay there that resulted in Lydia's response. It is often within these nuanced and complex experiences *within* experiences that result in these ambivalent feelings. These result in the volunteer feelings of both positive and negative valence. With Lydia, this was a rare experience of negativity amongst generally positive feelings. When considering Janet's experience that was cited at the end of the previous section, she will try and avoid physical activity completely. The embodiment of being physically exhausted, not keeping

up with the rest of the group and the subsequent feelings of inadequacy provide this negative experience. Feelings of ambiguity were also experienced by Tam in relation to the physicality of tasks:

'It can't always be sweetness and light when you do that every week, same as if you were doing sports, sometimes you get injured or sometimes you lose... the majority of the time it is good but you do have bad days.'

(Tam, EEV)

Tam is talking about how he has had injuries or knocks before when out on task days. He puts this down to being part of the overall volunteering experience and, like Lydia, alludes to the fact that this is the exception to the majority of his volunteering encounters. However, it does illustrate that volunteers do demonstrate these dual feelings towards using their bodily encounters.

Embodied experiences do not always bring back memories in the way that was described through Lydia, but can create opportunities for new discoveries and encounters:

'I am out every day in the park with the dogs. It's great because they take you places you wouldn't normally go and you get to see and hear new things – you usually end up walking twice as far as well! I like to go off the beaten track anyway, I like to be surprised and that's why I'm so passionate about Southside Park. It is so big, like a country park, I hear different birds all the time and have to try and find out what they are, the group even organised a night-time bat walk with bat detectors to hear their signals. That gave even me a new experience and I've been walking and volunteering here for my whole life.'

(Hannah, FSP)

Hannah found new ways of discovering Southside Park through experiencing the park in different ways through sound and in the dark. She would also use her experiences of birdsong as a stimulus to go and learn more about and identify various bird species.

In Rhona, her response to her embodied setting was one of peacefulness and a feeling of calm and reflection. Lydia, although only on this one occasion, found the embodied task an unpleasant one that brought back disagreeable memories. In others, like Tam, the fleeting presence of risking the body in volunteering tasks is accepted as part of the tasks. For Hannah, these experiences bring her new senses of discovery in a familiar space, one that she can revisit many times. The volunteers clearly experience the physical embodiment of tasks and relate to them in complex way, experiencing both positive and negative aspects of well-being. For others, these similar encounters bring a sense of spiritual well-being.

8.2 Spiritual and emotional well-being

Iain is a participant who volunteered with both EEV and SFRP. In his work life he was also involved with Scottish Natural Heritage. He described his volunteering as being ‘not just what I do, but how I live my life.’ He did not distinguish a separating line between boundaries such as home life, work life and volunteer life. Instead, he said that he had a way of living throughout his life that would fit in with his wider goals. When asked how many weeks of volunteering he would do in a year, his response was:

‘I volunteer every week and I go away for weeks at a time, sometimes longer. I work part-time but like I said, this is something that I link to my environmental ethic as well. It is all part of who I am and how I feel about things. I have my own beliefs... I’m not religious but I believe strongly in the earth and how I feel within it. It is a spiritual thing, a connection that I want to keep. Em, I look after myself but not to the detriment of other people or the land, because then I would not be looking after myself. Does that make sense?... If I lived

and didn't have these beliefs and take responsibility I would feel worse so to look after myself I look after what is around me.'

(Iain, EEV)

Iain goes on from expressing this link between his own well-being and lifestyle, and hinting towards his feelings of spirituality, to making these more explicit in terms of how it influences him:

'I feel that contact with nature all the time I am out volunteering. It is something that I feel is central to who I am. I feel a peacefulness that I can always go back to, even when I am not in those surroundings. That is why I chose the job I do and it influences all my decisions. I wouldn't do anything that made me unhappy or damaged me. It helped me through a tough break-up with a girlfriend a few years back. That's probably when it really saved me. That and the friends I have made... they share a lot of the same thoughts as me I suppose.'

(Iain, EEV)

These forms of well-being, one of drawing on a spiritual connection with the work and nature and being aware of one's well-being were further exemplified by another volunteer.

Larry is a volunteer who expressed himself strongly in terms of looking after 'mother earth' and having a responsibility to lead by example in this purpose. He also, however, linked this goal into being aware of his own health and the 'sacredness' that he attaches to his own well-being:

'one of my aims is to take more responsibility for my own health and well-being ...I like to think I work to be of service, it is a term that can be misconstrued as an inconvenience and for a large part of your life you are inconvenienced and this is not good for your health and well-being as you are reluctant to go in to work... so finding service and think how can I best be of service to myself, to family, to society, how to apply my skill and

experiences and sending that message out, how can I best be of service and look for these signs and the subtle insights to give me that direction to go in is probably the main thing'

(Larry, SFRP)

'Sacredness for me, when I think about the word sacred, there is a picture of a heart I keep getting so to develop the heart part of life, the sacredness within me, within others, it's quite varied but I feel a strong need to focus and grow on that and part of that sacredness is, kind of, seasonal cycle appreciation, part of it has come out of my own self development and part of that is probably... from a quote 'you must be the change you wish to see', and in a lot of ways, for me to be that change, I have to develop more sacredness within me. If I say I want to see sacredness in others and in life then I have to choose to become that. If I choose to seek more peace and tolerance and passion, love, respect, environmentally responsible stewardship then I have to be that and that has got me off being on my soapbox and waving my flag as I used to do, got me from judging others and going out and trying to convert them, possibly do it but not as intense as I used to.'

(Larry, SFRP)

Figure 8.2: Larry enjoying the wind. After the SFRP work-week was over Larry sent me this photo with the attached message: 'Here is me on top of a local hill, catching a breath of fresh air for you to enjoy. Loving the feel of the wind as always! Breathe Deep & Smile Wide'.



Source: Photograph taken by Larry, SFRP.

Larry is a volunteer who was particularly in tune with what he viewed as being important to his own well-being and, like Iain, he did not solely rely on his volunteering to provide this. He stayed in tune with seasonal cycles and also with his own responsibility and his will to 'lead by example'. This was an ethic that he was acutely aware of. He spoke of using even 'simple opportunities' such as spending time in his father's garden or going for a walk (Figure 8.2) to become more in tune with how he describes 'sacredness' in the first quote, above. This involves his inner and outer self, how he treats his own well-being and also how he approaches the environment and others around him. He interconnects these into an overall picture of well-being, a way of living his life, linking to ideas of responsibility to himself and others and also to a stewardship of the environment. He weaves this ethic through the way he lives his whole life. It is not always a spiritual essence of well-being and stewardship, however, which leads volunteers to having a sense of positive well-being from the volunteer tasks.

8.2.1 Practicality, not spirituality

The spiritual nature and approach of some volunteers, like Larry and Iain, would often be contrasted with the very practical approach of others. The volunteers would often relate this to reaching a certain goal or contributing towards a specific ecological aim:

'I do tend to just get as many trees as I can in the ground. As you probably guess, I'm not really into the attunements and that... I want to see the land with more trees in it. I do it back home and I do it here as well'

(Davis, SFRP)

'I couldn't believe it when the ranger told us how many grouse get killed by these fences. These things are out of date and I'm happy to pull them out with the group and get the bird numbers up. I'd rather just get on with it instead of standing about {at the attunements}.'

(Theresa, SFRP)

Both Davis and Theresa take pleasure from contributing towards tree numbers and grouse numbers respectively. They both go as far as to reject the spiritual connections that often go along with SFRP work-weeks and emphasise their interest in the practicality of contributing as opposed to taking part in the spiritual attunements in the mornings. The groupings of Iain and Larry and Davis and Theresa give the opposite ends of the spectrum. Many volunteers will express mixed feelings of both spirituality and a practical desire to engage with and contribute to their volunteering landscape:

'During a Sunday {task day} I take time out to ground myself and I take stock... for some me time and thinking time. I enjoy that quite aspect to it and I like to do that and kinda get zen (laughs). It doesn't take much time and I wouldn't do it if we were all working away in the group or anything, I still want to get everything done!'

(William, EEV)

William represents a large number of volunteers who take this attitude to the spiritual side of their volunteering and how it contributes to their well-being. They do not express themselves as fully as Larry, or even think as openly and deeply about it as Iain, but they do consistently express it as a part of their volunteering, a part that has a place beside and within their practical volunteering work and the aims and goals that they have in relation to that. All the volunteers in this section have given some form of social importance to their connections and the well-being that they glean from these connections. This will be further discussed in the next section.

8.3 Social well-being

Social well-being in this section will be broken into a number of sections that are particularly related to the group dynamic, social connections and shared feelings of well-being. To revisit the quote from the chapter introduction these will address ‘accounts which deal explicitly with issues of agency and empowerment, tackle themes like resilience as well as vulnerabilities’ (Pain and Smith, 2010: 301). This will be completed through examining group collective identity and feelings of belonging, group resilience and social connections and issues surrounding contested spaces.

8.3.1 *Collective identity*

A feeling of identifying with a specific group or a particular ethos helped enhance a sense of belonging within the groups. This involves a sharing of experience (in the volunteer tasks) but also in the sense of shared ethics and goals. This is returning to ideas of people being of the same mindset and feeling comfortable in the presence of others who share this identity:

‘I am a bit of a hippy, tree hugging and all that. I live on a canal boat, have an allotment, do all my volunteering... peace man! {laughter} I have been doing these weeks for a few years now, it gives me a chance to meet people who I usually get on with really easily. I came with friends this week but I happily come on my own as well. I feel comfortable in this group in a way I don’t normally in big groups, I’m more myself.’

(Sheena, SFRP)

'EEV-ers are a bit of a different breed. We are trusted by most of the landowners to be responsible and know what we are doing. I take pride in that and do enjoy being part of this group, I wouldn't like to join another group and be balled up in cotton wool or spoon fed or anything like that.'

(Victoria, EEV)

Sheena and Victoria are building upon a quote that was used in Chapter 5 from SFRP volunteer Clive. He describes his fellow work-week volunteers as not being like strangers to him because of their shared values. Sheena reflects this by explaining she feels 'more myself' in this particular group situation. Victoria also explains her connection with EEV as something unique by describing the group and the individuals within it as a 'different breed'. This feeling of a shared connection worked both at this group level and at a level of shared ethics and beliefs. Volunteers would put value in their being a part of a group. This group, on one hand, may be the volunteer group and their specific members. The group may also be a wider group, a group of a more global nature, distant others that they feel a connection with:

'I am part of something bigger when I volunteer. It feels like I have more of a purpose when I view it that way... as part of something bigger... you can take a bit of solace from that.'

(Sheena, SFRP)

The group does not always have to be physically together for these feelings to contribute to a notion of individual and social well-being. The fact that these connections can be across groups who have never met or over timescales of task are just as important. This links to the 'stretched out' communities (Miller, 1993) that were discussed in Chapter 7. These range from wholly imagined communities, through those with physically distant connections and also those with large physically proximate networks. It is the sense of having a shared purpose and goal and an enhanced sense of belonging that provides the

positive sense of well-being, whether in the direct local and physical spaces or these wider ‘stretched-out communities’.

8.3.2 Group resilience and the importance of social connections

With feelings of collective identity comes a feeling of belonging, encouraging optimism and a sense of achievement. Linking to this, volunteer experiences within a group were often dependent upon the perceived ‘successes’ of that group. Both at an individual and group level, frustration could often be felt if the direction of the group or the achievements of the group were not meeting what individuals expected. This would often result in feelings of frustration or disillusionment. Experiences of the Friends of Southside Park have already been used in previous chapters to illustrate a number of points about the members of the group and the tasks that they carry out. It has been shown that the group has been partly driven by the ‘successes’ of the group. In particular, one member has provided a large amount of this impetus. Barbara has described herself as a ‘do-er’ and it is she that takes a lead in organising events, sending out funding applications, chairing meetings and encouraging local awareness and participation.

It is through this work and the support of other active members of the group, that both Barbara and other members of FSP expressed their feelings of achievement and satisfaction. The sustainability of the group has largely been dependent on this:

‘I always feel a bit guilty because she {Barbara} does so much. But she does get things done and seems to enjoy it. I help out where I can... I’m chuffed we got the big funding shout though, it was so much effort, I don’t think Barbara could have faced another one if we had got that far and then not got it.’

(Justin, FSP)

Barbara spoke about this application herself in her interview, revealing some of the strains and stresses that she felt going through the lengthy process. Quoted fully in Chapter 6, Barbara is talking about the ups and downs she experiences when going through a funding application process. This involves moments of frustration, as well as times of elation when funding is secured. This begins to explain how volunteers can become disillusioned or frustrated. She also shows that she herself can become exhausted with the process and the responsibility and identifies the need to have a break ‘for a little while at least’. This need for a break was also explained by Larry:

‘I did a lot of external work, environmental work, before but I kinda exhausted that for a while and had to take time out. Interestingly, within the voluntary sector there’s a high burn-out rate, same with nurses, same with anyone that has a caring profession and I met a lot of environmentally focused people that were very much in tune with the environment but weren’t in tune with themselves’

(Larry, SFRP)

Both Larry and Barbara are acknowledging this possibility of ‘burnout’ and the need to take a break if necessary. Larry looks at this as people not being aware of and looking after their own well-being. Often burnout is associated with specific types of volunteering, such as counseling or hospice work (Bakker *et al.*, 2006; Keidel, 2002). These are forms of volunteering that can be viewed as care-giving. Larry relates to these ideas by saying burnout can be particularly problematic to those people who are responsible for others. Barbara, in a similar way, accepts that she may have been taking on too much work and responsibility within the group. However, at the end of the quote she hints towards this break maybe not lasting long. This is partly down to her ‘do-er’ attitude but also a feeling of responsibility towards the group as the one who organises and gets things organised. It is within this feeling that there may be detrimental effects to an individual’s well-being.

As well as the research that was conducted with the case study groups there were a number of contacts made with groups where further research was not possible. After contacting a different 'Friends of' city park group I enquired as to whether I could attend a meeting of the group and I received a very quick and emotional response from Craig, the group chairperson. He thanked me for my e-mail and my interest in the group but also indicated his intention to resign from the group in the immediate future. He referenced the 'extreme apathetic nature of the local public' and 'other issues' in relation the council's management of the park as his reasons for this. I was interested as to what would elicit such a strong response to a relative stranger, so I e-mailed back thanking the individual for his time and wishing him well in the future, to which I received a response the following day. He explained that he had been persuaded to continue as the chairperson, but that there were a number of issues that still had to be resolved before he would be happy that the group were being listened to. He invited me along to the next group meeting and I accepted this invite. I attended this meeting to see the dynamics of the group and to ascertain why Craig was feeling so frustrated at their progress. The following is an excerpt from the notes that were collated after the meeting:

'There was a sense of frustration from the chairperson, particularly because the council representative who had promised to attend was not there. The discussions around the group {there were six group members in attendance} were mainly around anti-social behaviour in the park and ways of reporting this... After the meeting the chairperson apologised to me for the low attendance but that that seemed to be the 'way of things' at the moment. There had been a number of items on the meeting agenda that could only be usefully discussed with the council member present. He definitely appeared to be disillusioned with the progress the group was making.'

(Group meeting notes)

Although having stayed in the role for another number of weeks, Craig eventually stood down, his reasons being the frustrations he felt at the progress of the group due to both

‘inside and outside influences’. The difference between Barbara and Craig was that Barbara felt as if goals were being achieved. She also had the support of other volunteers and was receiving positive feedback from the local council who supported and collaborated with the group. Craig felt that this support was not there. This emphasises the need for social networks and the cohesiveness of groups to maintain group resilience. Within this volunteer environment individuals feel a security and belonging. Without this support, there are feelings of isolation. The resiliency of a group depends strongly upon the connections between members of the group, with a shared responsibility and support network. It also involves wider social connections, to both members of the local community and to local authorities. This support and collaboration provides the impetus for the group, and individuals within it, to continue. This is most important in times of stress or pressure.

8.3.3 Contested spaces

To appreciate the importance of the above sections on collective identity and group resilience and social connections it is useful to look at a group that has had to deal with contested spaces, receiving opposition and setbacks along the way. Natural Space Action (NSA) is a group that has been in the middle of a contested space since their establishment. As outlined in previous chapters, their members have been fighting to use a council owned area of urban green space for community gardening, as opposed to seeing it sold for residential flat developments. Throughout this process there have been threats from the local council, court appearances and opposition from other local residents in the area. This has been felt most strongly by group’s chairperson and treasurer. There have been moments when Derek, the chairperson, even felt like quitting, but he cites the local support as keeping him determined to continue:

'I have felt like quitting a couple of times and just getting on with my own stuff. It has been mad really, I've had to read up on legal stuff that I had never dealt with before. I kept on going though; I think we are doing the right thing and I keep getting support from those around me. Ashling {the treasurer} has been great and just the turn-outs and letters of support make me more determined.'

(Derek, NSA)

It is through these times of pressure and strain that the support of other group members becomes most important. If those support networks are not there then the impetus for the group or individual to continue can be lost. The belief of doing the right thing, through a feeling of responsibility or an environmental ethic is part of the resilience but the presence of a support network and friendships sustain the group through more difficult times.

The contested nature of the NSA space creates an area that can also create friction and disagreement amongst local residents. One individual who opposed the NSA group wrote an open letter to the city councillors:

'The planned development by the developers was the overwhelming favourite at the recent public event and I have to say I heard no voices of protest at the plans for the site... The site development and subsequent development at the site will of course offer good employment opportunities, local businesses will benefit'

(Open letter to the local council regarding the space)

This individual was in favour of the planned flat developments and viewed the space as 'a local dog toilet' and an area of 'disease'. He also cited the limited number of people who would be interested in gardening and vegetable growing as a reason for the developments to be given the go ahead. This suggests that the group may not be as socially inclusive and representative of local feeling as is first apparent. Within those in the group who share the same views on the space, and often the same values, the feelings of support and positive

well-being are present. However, those with differing views find little or no attraction on entering the space in the form it is currently, and see it as being more beneficial to develop the area for a different usage.

When groups are operating within a local community, there are many opportunities for conflict. This often results in volunteer frustrations or feelings of disillusionment (as discussed in Chapter 7). This form of social participation does not always, therefore, generate social well-being within the community. Anita of CEG talks of there being animosity between the group and certain members of the community:

'I think some people see us as being out to be busy bodies and things like that. Don't get me wrong the vast majority of local feedback is positive though. I think it's inevitable that some people here don't agree with everything we do, or are not interested, but they are more than welcome to come along to meetings and tell us about it. I do feel that there are one or two individuals that have it in for me personally and I don't understand why.'

(Anita, CEG)

'In the previous two meetings much of the conversation has been around individuals that seem to be slowing things down within the group. Anita has voiced concern about this and other committee members have asked if they can help. The issue seems to be about a disagreement over whether non-native trees should be removed from the local park. The local park ranger has asked CEG to do this but volunteers have been challenged by other residents as to whether they are allowed.'

(CEG committee meeting notes)

CEG, like NSA, do receive opposition from some members of the local community in relation to certain tasks. Anita mentions that the majority of feedback is positive but that there is often some opposition or disagreement in how tasks are carried out. This does work in opposition to the simple idea of green spaces providing spaces of 'neighbourhood

sociability' (Kurtz, 2001: 658). Indeed, these notions of contestation are illustrated by Kurtz's view of urban gardening and community:

'today's gardeners take part in a mediation of nature and culture which is subject to innumerable interpretations and colored by nutritional need, medicinal purposes, religious beliefs, aesthetic preferences and access to land and resources. In community gardens, this mediation is made more complex by the intersection of gardening with the notion of fostering urban community'

(Kurtz, 2001: 660)

As a result of differing viewpoints on the usage and management of community green spaces, this results on not only 'fostering urban community' but providing contestation over how the land is used.

8.4 Therapeutic landscapes and well-being

Collins and Kearns (2007) viewed beaches and their potential as therapeutic landscapes to provide an enhanced degree of physical or psychological removal from the everyday, an opportunity to be closer to natural environments, and as providing opportunities for both solitude and social activity. A number of volunteers have identified the landscapes in which they volunteer as being particularly important to them and how they frame their volunteering (see Chapter 6). Here, the desire to 'put health into place' heralded by Kearns and Gesler (1998) will be examined in terms of volunteer experiences. Putting health into place illustrated the desire to identify place-related impacts on individual health and well-being. This continued with the underlying concept of therapeutic landscapes being framed around built and natural environments, social interactions and the symbolic meaning of those elements for an individual (Gesler, 1992). Other well-being elements have been

discussed more fully in physical, personal and social well-being contexts. In this section the focus will remain on the natural environment but link this to the wider volunteer experience. This will link to Thrift's notion of there needing to be 'a skill or artistry in our engagements with place' (Thrift, 1998: 310-311). In other words, a therapeutic experience is not a simple and linear relationship of being in a space and receiving 'positive well-being.'

A therapeutic environment is therefore not therapeutic in itself, but depends on how an individual perceives and interacts with this environment. To some, wilderness environments and park and green spaces may be perceived with trepidation or anxiety due to them being identified as unfamiliar spaces. However, the majority of responses from the volunteer participants were positive when reflecting on the green spaces of their volunteering, covering both local and more distant places:

'I enjoy going away for the residential weekends but I'm just as happy going somewhere nearby. It is important to me to be in somewhere 'green', to be somewhere fresher and nicer. I'm sure it does me good, be it for my body or for my spirit.'

(Evan, EEV)

Evan is linking the volunteering landscape and his well-being with social connections, physical and spiritual well-being. He views 'green' spaces as being important to him but does not differentiate any further than that. Some volunteers do feel a stronger sense of stillness and well-being from being further removed to more distant spaces, reflecting the work of Conradson (2007). Conradson emphasises importance of this removal from everyday spaces to enhance a feeling of stillness.

'I do think that it has helped me to be further away, out of phone reception and all that. I'm not sure if it would be the same if I was getting texts and could pop back down the road

in no time... I don't think it would. The wilderness feeling is great, I enjoy having to physically walk to the locations and you can't even see the mini-bus anymore, you are just surrounded {by the landscape} and left to yourself.'

(Graham, SFRP)

Graham enjoys the removal from everyday life, in terms of time, distance and a break from outside communication. He experiences being 'further away' but also being 'surrounded' by the landscape, giving him time without distractions and interruptions. Again, this has linkages with personal and physical notions of well-being in his walk to task locations and to his mind placement in these landscapes. This is showing that it is not just this landscape alone that is the therapeutic encounter. Rather, it is the interconnectedness between the volunteering landscape and the social and personal well-being connections that occur and that are valued by the volunteers.

8.5 Well-being experiences through environmental volunteering

The aspects and issues around individual and group well-being discussed in this chapter have illustrated the complexities and nuances of physical, emotional and social well-being. These experiences are diverse and often illustrated tensions, even within individual volunteers, of positive or negative well-being that they experience from their volunteering. This chapter has crossed over the final three research questions, examining well-being across a range of themes. These themes will now be examined individually to show their significance.

A positive and physical well-being can be felt through the embodied experience of the tasks. Individuals may take a particular pleasure from physically demanding tasks and relate this to a feeling of body fitness and strength. This reinforces the arguments (Cooper *et al.*, 1999; Pretty *et al.*, 2005; Hartig, 2008) that physical activity in natural environments

can reinforce positive psychological well-being. In contrast however, some volunteers found find the physicality something that should be avoided and something that is beyond certain bodies, resulting on feelings of being 'left behind' and as being the 'odd-one out'. The risk factors in physical well-being are, therefore, not only ones of injury or accident, accepted as part of the volunteering by some. These risks are also psychological ones that may be detrimental to an individual's place in the group. This may lead to a volunteer losing confidence and reducing their volunteering activity. The experiences of the volunteers are not homogenous and well-being considerations through this lens must be viewed as nuanced. Understanding that, when volunteering is encountered through the site of the body, the ability of that body then becomes integral to the whole experience.

An embodied and multi-sensory experience can provide opportunities for reflection and solitude. Feelings of stillness (Conradson, 2007) were experienced in both distant and local environments. This highlights the need for there to be 'artistry' (Thrift, 1998) in the way that volunteers engage with the surroundings. In fact, the word 'surround' shows the importance that volunteers placed on that feeling of immersion or 'getting lost in' a particular landscape, in term of both their physical and mind placement. These encounters are particularly potent for stimulating both positive and negative memories. They may also provide occasions for new discovery and new ways of experiencing a place. Within both physical and embodied experiences there are also feelings of ambiguity. The experiences are not always binary but will involve nuances of positivity or negativity. The physical experience may not always or consistently be either a good or a bad one. Instead, an individual's personal abilities, attitudes and experiences will shape how they engage with these aspects of physical well-being.

A number of volunteers explicitly found spiritual and personal well-being through their volunteering and how they related this to their wider lifestyle. There is value put on the

natural environment but this is not necessarily kept separate in their opinion. Instead, this is integrated through all parts of their life. This well-being was seen as being a part of them, not something that is separate and only to be indulged on solitary occasions. On the other hand, some volunteers would reject this spiritual and emotional connection and have a more practical and goal oriented approach. However, the majority of volunteers would find a balance between these two imagined ends of the scale, and include both the practicality and spirituality of tasks as contributing in some way to their well-being. This balance between connecting with nature and being in natural environments and the solitude this can provide is balanced with the social activity that also contributes to feelings of well-being.

These social connections help reinforce personal relationships and friendships that aid the individual through moments of emotional hardship 'outside' their volunteering. This feature is perhaps less related to the environment and aspects of therapeutic landscapes, but instead to social activity and support networks. These support networks also help increase the resilience of individuals and groups when undergoing times of stress or pressure. This reflects the importance of shared pleasures and achievement to an improved sense of well-being (Pain and Smith, 2010; Townsend, 2006). It also means that when there are moments of conflict, be it through an overload of personal responsibility or be it over a contested space, the resilience of the group will be stronger in cases of groups that share responsibility and have a feeling of cohesion. This includes having positive contact with other local residents and having a successful relationship with local authorities and other groups. This shows how social capital can be built in a number of different ways within environmental volunteering. These group connections enable a stronger sense of individual and community well-being for those involved with the volunteer group.

The significance that individuals placed in their volunteering landscape and how they linked this with their own well-being has wide ranging connections, beyond that of solely

being in a green or wilderness space. Instead, with linkages to therapeutic landscape literature, the places of volunteering relate to the other personal, emotional, physical and social aspects of well-being that have been discussed in this chapter. This contributes to Collins and Kearns (2007) ways in which a therapeutic landscape may be experienced. It shows that the social and solitary combinations of environmental volunteer group work in these landscapes can contribute to a feeling of well-being. This section emphasised the need for a particular engagement with the landscape, one that would mean the experience was positive. For the environmental volunteers, their experiences in these green spaces were largely positive through their physical, emotional and social interactions that occurred with (and within) the landscape.

Chapter 9: Conclusions and Discussion

The thesis has explored the relationship between well-being and environmental volunteering in Scotland. There has been a particular focus on the aspects of emotional and social well-being that connect through the tasks and landscapes involved in active volunteering within natural environments. This chapter reflects on the key issues that emerge from these findings and highlights the contribution that the thesis makes to current research and approaches to volunteering and also offers points that can connect and build on policy relevant issues linking to the Forestry Commission Scotland and the Scottish Government. This begins in Section 9.1 by examining the environmental volunteering motivations that have been encountered within the thesis. Section 9.2 addresses the issue of well-being across landscape and nature, embodiment and physicality and community and social networks. These first two sections deal directly with the first of the aims and objectives that are listed below:

- Examine the links between well-being, nature and environmental volunteering
- Explore the ways in which social and emotional capital are engendered through active nature work
- Contribute to conceptual agendas of human-nature interactions, active citizenship and therapeutic landscapes
- Inform policy relevant debates within the Forestry Commission and the Scottish Government on environmental volunteering

Section 9.3 will explore the final three aims and objectives by looking at the wider implications that the thesis raises in relation to these. Finally, Section 9.4 examines possible future research directions that have been identified through the thesis.

9.1 Understanding environmental volunteering motivations

This first section of the chapter reviews the results of the research in relation to the first research question: what are the initial and continuing motivations for individuals to participate in environmental volunteering? These motivations were split along those motivations that were environmentally focused in their scope, and those that were non-environmental. This split was made in an attempt to uncover what was particularly distinct about environmental volunteering, as opposed to other general forms of volunteering. It must be recognised, however, that these labels are by no means unproblematic. There were blurred connections between the environmental and non-environmental motivations and the focus should be more on how these combine and crossover, as opposed to how they are separate and detached.

The initial environmental motivations often took the form of ethical and moral obligations felt by the volunteer to either a specific landscape or to a wider environmental responsibility. These were also often directly related to aspects of their own personal well-being and to their individual past experiences of certain landscapes. This resulted in them having a desire to actively protect or restore particular green spaces. This operated across different scales and would result in some volunteers feeling drawn to operate close to their own home (in a local area) or going further afield to volunteer ('removed volunteering'). Ecological citizenship helped some way to inform these motivations and to help frame them (Thomashow, 199; Dobson, 2000). This was done through gaining a stronger understanding of the environmental ethics and values that underpinned the volunteering motivations as these were fundamental to the environmental volunteering experience.

These forms of local or removed volunteering affected the experience that the volunteers would have. The volunteers from the groups who would spend weekends/weeks in

removed locations, away from their everyday lives, described this phenomenon as being particularly important. This again linked in with ideas of creating 'stillness' (Conradson, 2007) and being able to recharge away from other obligations. The distance was therefore as important as the tasks that were being carried out. The landscape of the volunteering also featured prominently for the volunteers for the Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP). The volunteering could be used as an opportunity to see more of Scotland and view 'beautiful' landscapes. The desire to see the landscapes in different seasons and over longer periods of time also played a part in this form of environmental volunteering.

When considering the local area and park groups, the initial motivations would, by contrast, often be non-environmental. The main stimulus to volunteer would frequently stem from a desire to be involved in the local community and to make social connections. This was a way to either get involved in an area new to the volunteer, or as a way to make friends. The continuing motivations to volunteer would require the initial motivations to be fulfilled to some extent, but there was also a strong element of surprise within the actual experience. This was contrary to the functional approach of Finkelstein (1999) that puts the main focus on a positive experience being so strongly directed on the fulfillment aspect of initial motivations. Individuals would begin their volunteering with one or more motivations to join the volunteering group, but once they began taking part it was often the case that new and/or unexpected continuing motivations would stimulate them to become regular volunteers. They may make friends when they were originally interested in only clearing a local section of river, or they may find themselves becoming passionate about the plight of an area of land when they had originally just wanted to make friends in a new area. It also went beyond this to some volunteers feeling obligated to continue. A number of the volunteers felt a responsibility to turn up every week to facilitate committee meetings or assist in setting up a task. In some cases these would be negative aspects of the

volunteering that were either viewed as a necessary evil or a part of the volunteering that could bring them anxiety.

The thesis has demonstrated the importance of scale and time that were consistent and recurring themes throughout the environmental motivations. As well as this, issues of stewardship and responsibility played a strong part. Personal well-being and social factors held differing roles, depending on the nature of the group and the past experience of volunteers in certain landscapes, as well as their ethical stance. The removal aspect also had a function in influencing the motivational decisions of the volunteers. These issues all spanned environmental and non-environmental, as well as personal and non-personal motivations to volunteer. For individual volunteers, initial motivations were easier to define and less problematic than those that then compelled them to continue. This is because the motivations became more complex and numerous and morphed from just fulfilling original motivations, to being tied emotionally and socially with the volunteer group. Friendships would be made and obligations would be felt to perform certain tasks for the group. This social and shared notion of well-being (Pain and Smith, 2010) was therefore important to understand how personal well-being was impacted by the volunteering activity. This means looking across a range of forms of well-being and using them to answer a number of the research questions.

9.2 Impacts of environmental volunteering on well-being

The aspects and issues around individual and group well-being discussed in the thesis have illustrated the complexities and nuances of physical, emotional and social well-being. These results will go towards answering research questions two, three and four. The well-being impacts are experienced in a range of ways and will be discussed in this section. The first of these is through the landscape and physically being in natural environments. The

second is through the tasks that are being completed and the physicality involved in this active environmental volunteering. Finally, the impacts of community and social relationships will be examined to see how they influence individual well-being.

9.2.1 The role of landscape and nature

Volunteers experienced landscape and nature in different ways. When arriving and first glimpsing particular Highland wilderness landscapes, a number of emotions were expressed by volunteers, including silence, contemplation and wonder. These are generally positive emotions that then set the tone for the continued contact with those spaces throughout the volunteer experience. These responses took place in a solitary fashion or as part of a shared group appreciation and this fits in with the idea of there being a positive association with volunteers being removed from their everyday life (Conradson, 2005b). In addition to this, however, a familiar area can also be transformed and re-discovered through the time or season of the volunteer work. Already ‘known’ landscapes to the volunteer could change into something that renewed their interest or reminded them of how much they value that particular place. This transformation of a space may also take place due to a realisation of the work that goes into up-keeping and maintaining a certain area, even if the volunteer had experienced that area in a different context and/or appearance many times before. Therefore, it was not always necessary for volunteers to be at a physically distant and removed location to experience positive associations with the green spaces in which they volunteered. Continuing Conradson’s (2010) theme of stillness, the opportunity for this form of well-being was observable in both urban green spaces and wilderness spaces. It may have been more pronounced in the more remote areas that Scottish Forest Regeneration Project (SFRP) worked but there still existed opportunities for reflection within the urban green and park spaces as illustrated by volunteers in Natural Space Action (NSA) and also the Community Environmental Group (CEG) eco-poetry

group. In the wilderness areas, ideas associated with stillness were actively encouraged by SFRP, through group sharing and attunements. Volunteers who had removed themselves from the spaces of their everyday lives to these more remote locations seemed to have a stronger propensity to these moments of calm and reflection as this was encouraged on a group level. Within the other groups these moments would more often happen when taking part in solitary work or when spending time in the area after the volunteer task had taken place.

The theme of embodiment and the multi-sensory experiences that volunteers encountered in their first foray into the landscape featured strongly in the memory accounts of the volunteering here. These could either be positive or negative experiences, of feeling awed or humbled by an impressive vista or of feeling saddened at a vandalised area of park woodland. Another aspect of the interface of the volunteer, nature and landscape was volunteer engagements with weather condition and the affect this had varied greatly. Discussions by the volunteers would be more concerned with the practicalities of different weather conditions, as opposed to how these affected their moods or emotions. They would often be discussed in terms of how adverse weather could negatively contribute to lower numbers of attendees at an event. Extremes of weather and task, such as planting trees in a blizzard, would elicit feelings of excitement but these were moments of exception, the normal outlook being that of practicality. Volunteer understandings of the seasonality of landscapes, however, were discussed in a more emotional way. The connection and awareness gained from plant cycles and growing seasons promoted feelings of patience and taking things at a slower pace. This was also shown by Parr (2007) when looking at community gardening schemes. The progress of individual plants or projects could be viewed across different seasons of the year and valued. This contributed towards a feeling of mindfulness of the passing of time. Volunteers placed importance on seeing progress made on a task and in a particular landscape that they had contributed to, even if this was

not an instant gratification but one that occurred over a number of months and years. Instant improvements to landscapes (as perceived by the volunteer) that could be instantly viewed also brought about volunteer feelings of satisfaction and achievement. This would include tasks of aesthetic improvement such as clearing redundant deer fencing or clearing an area of graffiti or litter. The thesis has also shown that volunteers would look ahead to how their actions would impact future generations of humans and non-humans. The simple idea of working in a beautiful landscape was also valued. When volunteers were asked to photograph and describe their volunteer work, a large number of the responses were landscape photographs of the areas in which the groups worked. These were then used by the volunteers to illustrate their role within this landscape and where they felt their volunteering actions fitted within the landscape. This understanding of being part of the landscape and influencing nature continued themes of stewardship and responsibility but also elicited feelings of pride in what they could achieve both individually and as part of a wider group. This echoes belief that landscape can be understood as a 'particular set of cultural values, attitudes and meanings: a 'way of seeing' the world' (Wylie, 2007: 153). One of these central ways of seeing the world is through an embodied and bodily experience in particular spaces (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). The thesis has shown how volunteers engage with these issues through the value they put in being immersed in these natural environments as they volunteer. The landscapes of the volunteering are, therefore, a complex mix of mind and body, of culture and nature.

The thesis also illustrates how a number of volunteers explicitly found spiritual and personal well-being through their volunteering and how they related this to their wider lifestyle. There is value put in the way that the volunteer can engage in that direct way with the natural environment, but this is not necessarily kept separate from how they live the rest of their lives. There is not a line that they would make between their principles as a volunteer and those that they apply in their everyday life. This well-being was seen as

being a part of their moral and ethical (sometimes religious) landscape, not something that is separate and only to be indulged on solitary volunteering occasions. For these volunteers, an overarching ethos such as ecological citizenship was part of a way of life, and the impact on their well-being was cumulative from not only their volunteering but their wider actions. This lifestyle was not common to all the volunteers, some would reject this spiritual and emotional connection and have a more practical and goal oriented approach. For example, the focus would be on a planting as many trees as possible, as opposed to gaining a physical and emotional connection with the landscape and soil that the trees were being placed into. Hinchliffe (2007) writes about how these outcomes (practical and emotional) can exist together in a successful project. When writing about the 'Concrete to Coriander' project in Birmingham, he notes that there are practical outcomes set by funders that provide them with goals to be reached and an exit strategy that can then be employed. Hinchliffe criticises this by highlighting how this can lead to aspects of care becoming less visible. This can then be lost within what he describes as 'ecology of action' (ibid: 187) that homogenises environmental actions. This thesis has shown how the 'ethics of care' (McDowell, 2004) must be kept central to the volunteering actions as these emotions are fundamental within the values of the volunteers.

Volunteers would take enjoyment from completing a single task from start to finish and seeing an end result to their effort. As well as this, many also viewed themselves and the job they did (away from volunteering) as being part of a bigger picture, as part of a wider physical and imagined team that exists in the present but also has connections to achievements of those in the past and the endeavour of those who take up the task and ethos in the future. The majority of volunteers would find a balance between these two imagined ends of the scale, and include both the practicality and spirituality of tasks as contributing in some way to their well-being. This balance between connecting with

landscape and being in natural environments involved a physical and embodied experience of 'being' and 'doing' the volunteering.

9.2.2 The role of embodiment and physicality

A number of themes emerged from the research regarding the embodied and physical nature of the environmental volunteering. The term mind placement is used in Chapter 7 to describe what they are thinking as they conduct the physical tasks. Some volunteers would use this time to chat to others or even listen to music. Others would be enveloped in the task and concentrating on the job at hand. The mind placement of volunteers when they were carrying out certain tasks often triggered volunteers to become absorbed in the job that they were completing and to use it as time to clear their mind. Again, the importance of the stillness of task and how some of the volunteering groups deliberately encouraged volunteers to take their time and appreciate the present and what they are doing in that moment added to this feeling. This could lead to spaces of relaxation and reflection for the volunteers. On the other hand, this time could also encourage the volunteer to think of issues going on in their wider life. This could either provide time to think these issues through, or in some cases bring up more difficult memories, such as of loved ones who had died. Some volunteers also spoke of painful memories that, especially repetitive tasks, could contribute to. This was due to the nature of the task giving the volunteer more time to contemplate these issues. The thesis shows that in the embodied act of doing the volunteering, certain tasks can encourage particular emotional responses that are not always welcome or expected by the volunteer but may provide them with the space and support to be able to deal with these experiences through the social and emotional support networks around them, as well as the tasks and landscapes of the environmental volunteering.

Throughout work days, volunteers would also take the time to look out at the landscape and enjoy the environment that they were enveloped in. They would stop and gaze at the view or at a particular point of interest, be it an eagle soaring overhead or an incoming gathering of rainclouds. In particular, during physical tasks such as tree felling or fence removal, a number of volunteers expressed the pleasure that they took in the destructive side of the work and how they used that to release physical energy as a form of cathartic release. This aggression would often go hand-in-hand with their environmental ethics and morals. The language used by some of the volunteers followed this pattern, talking about environmental issues in terms of 'battlegrounds' and 'wars'. Their volunteering could be a physical release of their anger and literally embodied the way they had chosen to express and take action on their environmental views. Other volunteers explained that they use their volunteering time to recharge and they would have feelings of angst and frustration if they did not manage to attend their regular volunteering days. Again, the embodied nature of environmental volunteering tasks was highlighted, with volunteers putting a strong significance on having a firm bodily and sensory connection to the land that they were working in. Volunteers would very much view their experiences through the body and describe their experiences through how things physically felt, be it sensations of cold, heat, texture, pain or pleasure. The geography of the body as being a site of emotional experience and expression was very much central to this understanding (Davidson and Milligan, 2004). Volunteers would resist ungainly protective clothing that they viewed as restrictive in favour of using their bare hands, which was seen as being both more efficient in the practicality of the task, but also in feeling an emotional and embodied connection to what they were doing and the landscape they were in. The physical bodily exposure was as much a part of the contribution to well-being as the completion of the tasks and raises an interesting challenge to volunteer-engaging groups to find a balance between the desire for volunteers to have physical exposure to the environment they are working, and for fulfilling health and safety requirements.

As well as a positive feeling of well-being that was felt through the embodied experience of the tasks, there was also a more direct physical experience of well-being. Some individuals received enjoyment from physically demanding tasks and related this to a positive feeling of body fitness and well-being. In contrast, others found the physicality of some of the tasks something that should be avoided and something that is beyond certain bodies, resulting in feelings of being 'left behind' and isolated by the others. The risk factors in physical well-being are, therefore, not only ones of injury or accident, accepted as part of the volunteering by some. These risks are also psychological ones that may be detrimental to an individual's place in the group. This may lead to a volunteer losing confidence and reducing their volunteering activity. This has to be monitored and managed by the volunteer groups, making sure that there are tasks that, when appropriate and possible, are able to be carried out by individuals of differing physical abilities. The experiences are not always binary but will involve nuances of positivity or negativity. The physical experience may not always or consistently be either a good or a bad one. Instead, an individual's personal abilities, attitudes and experiences will shape how they engage with these aspects of physical well-being.

9.2.3 Community and social impacts

As well as influencing forms of personal, physical and emotional well-being, the environmental volunteering also uncovered aspects of social well-being that resulted from the group work. This was particularly shown within the various understandings of community and how this was understood by the volunteers and started at the very beginning of the volunteer experience. The arrival stories illustrated the step taken from signing up to a work-week or deciding to go along to a community clean-up, to actually turning up and meeting new people. For some, this moment of anxiety could be very rewarding to overcome. For others, the excitement and expectation of meeting new people

overrode such worries. The opening arrival of volunteers at a meeting point often produced feelings and encounters that shaped the rest of the volunteer experience and contributed towards building or undermining confidence. The ability to share these common feelings was something that could bond the group. It was in this space that the seeds of longer lasting friendships could be sown. It may be a simple hello or the instigation of conversation with a relative stranger but these initial moments of contact helped set the social connections that continued (and changed) through the volunteering lifetime. Across the groups there are themes of commonality with their roots in environmental volunteering.

The social networks that build as a result of volunteering within the groups help shape both the volunteer experience within the task but also feed into influencing everyday life and creating support networks that go beyond just the volunteering activities. The thesis has illustrated how the volunteering becomes intertwined and merged with various areas of the volunteers' social and life networks. The volunteering may shape future directions in terms of job selection or career direction. Some individuals, after volunteering, left their job to seek employment that directly dealt with their environmental volunteering. This, in two cases, involved a move geographically, as well as professionally where the volunteer would move closer to the area in which they conducted their environmental volunteering (as discussed in relation to Jason, an SFRP volunteer, in Chapter 5). Friendships made during the volunteering would therefore become even more prominent and important for the social well-being of that individual, moving from being peripheral friends and acquaintances at certain times, to being their core group of friends. These social connections could also help reinforce personal relationships and friendships that aid the individual through moments of emotional hardship 'outside' their volunteering. This aspect is related to social activity and support networks. These support networks also help increase the resilience of individuals and groups when undergoing times of stress or pressure. Pain and Smith (2010) have shown how a social and geographical notion of well-

being is identifiable through 'a collective concern and responsibility for individuals' location, action and experience in local, national and global society' (ibid: 301). It is partly through the support of the group and the collective action that a social well-being is felt.

The thesis has illustrated that there are times when a volunteer or a volunteer group can be faced with issues over the use of a particular space, lack of funds, or the operation of the group, and subsequently go through periods of frustration. When there is conflict, be it through an overload of personal responsibility or be it over a contested space, the resilience of the group will be stronger in cases of groups that share responsibility and have a feeling of cohesion. This includes having positive contact with other local residents and having a successful relationship with local authorities and other groups. Townsend (2006) noted the connection here between shared pleasure and well-being. However, if a group experiences negative contacts with these local bodies or fails to be successful in securing funding or attracting volunteers to task days then it can result in them becoming disheartened and frustrated. This may encourage those volunteers to break contact with the group, or for the group to stop functioning altogether. Positive experiences of these encounters have an opposite effect and encourage the group's enthusiasm and confidence to move forward. This is often related to how the groups interact with the communities they operate in and how they choose to define and shape that definition of community.

The distinctiveness of environmental volunteering is highlighted by how the volunteers put emphasis on a general environmental ethos, not just focussing on solely an active environmental task. This is reflected in how they position themselves within their own definition of community. A number of the groups view community through involving those people that they see as local residents. This can be achieved through having new volunteers coming along to tasks, by involving them in expressing their views at committee meetings or making them aware of local environmental issues through events or

other visible outputs. This understanding of community can involve seeing an area as particularly bounded within space and can sometimes provide areas for exclusion as well as inclusion across boundaries or within spaces. There are also forms of Miller's (1993) 'stretched-out' communities working across the groups in more unbounded and diverse ways that can be imagined, physically distant or physically proximate. The thesis has shown how volunteers view themselves across these boundaries, having a very loose but wide-ranging definition of the communities that they want to engage with. It is often these understandings of community that are unexpected outcomes for the groups. It may even be that these outcomes are not acknowledged as community outcomes at all by those who run or fund the groups. However, it is within these complex social interactions that work across individuals, groups, spaces and activities that the breadth of understanding community relations within environmental volunteering is particularly useful. These interactions are then played out within embodied encounters with nature that are valued by the volunteers. The environmental focus makes a difference in terms of the scale in which the volunteering is considered by the volunteer, but also in terms of how the tasks are performed through the body. The environmental ethos is apparent both through the emotional connection with, and also the physical practice of, the volunteering.

9.3 Wider implications of the thesis

The following discussions explore the final three aims and objectives of the thesis outlined in at the beginning of the chapter. The first section will begin by discussing the social and emotional capital linkages with active nature work.

9.3.1 Engendering social and emotional capital through active nature work

Addressing the second aim involves looking at the ‘active nature work’. Throughout the thesis this has been discussed in terms of the physical activity of participating in environmental volunteering. It is within this ‘doing’ that the richness of the volunteering took place and where the core of the emotional capital was built. This related to creating more ‘lively and creative accounts’ (Conradson, 2003: 1989) of volunteering and participation. The liveliness here was contained in not only the accounts, but also the volunteering itself. The practices and feelings associated with social participation showed the different kinds of ‘doings’ (Jupp, 2008) that enliven the volunteering and crossed over the boundaries of people, place and experience (Rose, 1993). The accounts in the thesis demonstrate the volunteer experience that goes beyond a description of just the volunteering. Travelling beyond the volunteering involves not just exploring the contribution in terms of participation numbers or societal benefits, but those of personal value and emotional engagement. To harness these is to grasp the ethics of the volunteer and begin to see how emotions run through these ‘lived geographies’ (Parr, 2005) of volunteering. This steps over the line of a top down or politically led responsibility of voluntary activity. Instead, environmental volunteering ethics fold themselves within the values that the volunteer emotional engages with and physically acts upon. This reflects the ‘ethic of care’ (McDowall, 2004) that individuals feel towards their volunteering. This involves an emotional attachment with the tasks and actions that the volunteer takes part in, their fellow volunteer, as well as the natural landscapes that this takes place. This is by no means a wholly altruistic engagement. In fact, it became clear that volunteers would show awareness of the positive affect that the volunteering had on them. The two would often walk hand-in-hand: a feeling of contributing to the environment through their volunteering would feed into and nurture future participation and the benefits that individuals felt from these engagements. It is here that the practicality of the task and the

spirituality of the encounters converge. The embodied 'fleshy reality' (Hall, 2000: 28) of the body is the vessel that transports the ethics into practice and enables the emotional responses that run through all these aspects. Like any vessel, this body carries the cargo to a destination. The cargo is the volunteer actions and practices, and the destination is the outcome that the volunteer seeks to gain that fits in with their beliefs, values, hopes and expectations. The emotional capital that the volunteers experienced travels through these processes (Thien, 2005) and is formed by them. That was why it was so important to look at the case study groups across their social, committee and task activities. The 'doing' involves all of these embodied and emotionally charged aspects of the volunteering that are exhibited through the body (Davidson and Milligan, 2010). Part of the process is the social networks that shape the volunteer groups and the community connections that this contributes towards.

Participation in environmental volunteering involved individuals locating and working with groups that shared their own environmental beliefs and goals (at least to some extent). Social capital was built through volunteers carrying out tasks with 'those of the same mind' and making friendships that go beyond just the volunteering activities. These connections reinforce the group itself and the goals that the group has. This shared camaraderie created a resilience that helped to focus group activity and also strengthen personal traits. Roberts and Devine (2004) noted that these social capital benefits require an active participation in volunteering that brings together individuals through shared objectives (Putnam, 1995). This takes the form of learning or applying skills, creating confidence in their own beliefs and setting up support networks of friends, all of which contribute to a sense of social and personal well-being. Again, Townsend (2006) highlights the emotional importance within environmental volunteering of being in nature, making friends and community connections, and also sharing pleasure in the work that is carried out. Going beyond this, the thesis has shown how these skills and networks help

individuals to manage times of emotional adversity. This is through having friends that they can talk to, but also through having a sense of purpose that they actively contribute towards.

Nevertheless, there was still evidence of tensions among members around both the direction and aims of the group. The 'group' should therefore not be treated as a homogenous entity. Individual perceptions and motivations and where they interact or differentiate with the group expose strong feelings and can reinforce existing group views or create fissures amongst members. A volunteer group may present itself as a cohesive unit that pursues universally shared goals, but this was not always a true reflection of the relationships and personalities that were displayed during the research. As with any organisation there were divisions of power, clashes of personality and differences of opinion. This could occur within the group or between the group and members of the wider community. This reflected an aspect of well-being that was not always positive when encountered by the groups. If the problem or tension could be overcome then it could lead to the individual or the group becoming stronger. On the other hand, if the problem proved to be insurmountable, then it could lead to individuals leaving the group or becoming disillusioned with the volunteer work.

9.3.2 Conceptual agendas of human-nature interactions, active citizenship and therapeutic landscapes

The definition of community that the volunteers engaged with worked on a number of levels. For some groups this may be the local residents that share or use a particular green space. The thesis has shown how this definition must involve a more 'stretched-out' (Miller, 1993) form of community that extends across space (local, regional, national, global), one that exists in varying physical and imaginary forms (personal contact, verbal,

virtual) and also one that happens over time (past, present, future). The way this view works across scales is one that is reflected by an ecological and not just active form of citizenship. Active citizenship can be defined as citizens taking opportunities to become actively involved in the problems of their communities and improving their quality of life (Active Citizenship Centre, 2006). This would fit in most comfortably with the 'local resident' view of community: action being taken for the good of a local and geographically close shared area. Ecological citizenship, while also believing in local action and participation, goes beyond just local areas and links in with an ethos that is morally driven (Dobson, 2003). Ecological citizenship involves an individual looking at wider 'bioregions and ecosystems' (Thomashow, 1995) and having an ethically determined standpoint and not one that would be led by political means. In the research it became clear that these feelings resonated with many of the volunteers. They felt a connection to distant others through their volunteering and it was not just the physical and verbal contact they had from group members that reinforced this, but also imaginary contact with those of similar goals that existed globally. This would sometimes also take the form of online social networks that helped to reaffirm these connections. This gave 'removed' or one-off volunteers the ability to keep in contact with group members that they had shared their experience with.

However, the research did reveal that, contrary to a purely ecological citizenship viewpoint that the nation is no longer relevant (Thomashow, 1995), there were still connections and motivations that were driven from a national standpoint. The desire to see more of Scotland, or to either preserve or restore a particularly Scottish landscape, was often cited as a motivation for a number of volunteers. This was especially prominent amongst those travelling to volunteer for the Scottish Forest Regeneration Project. The research also revealed connections with Melo-Escribuela's (2008) critique of ecological citizenship that highlights how ecological citizenship is often viewed from an individualistic standpoint. The thesis illustrated that the root and motivation for taking part in environmental

volunteering may begin as individualistic, but the way in which the volunteering takes place manifests itself within collective engagement and social networks. There is a necessity to work collectively to make a difference, even if the group work aspect of the volunteering was not an initial motivation or desire on the part of the individual. The volunteers would also perceive the volunteering across temporal boundaries. There would be a realisation of the work that had gone on before them, their place in the line of the volunteering, and a vision of what would happen in the future. A connection would be made between those who had gone before them and those who would be here in the future. The term 'stewardship' was used to describe the act of caring for the environment for future generations. This outlook was often explained as being rooted in the environmental landscapes of the volunteering, fitting in with plant or tree lifecycles, or even geological timescales far beyond that of their own lifetime. The Thomashow (1995) use of ecological citizenship needs, therefore, to be revised to include these complexities. This would necessarily involve an inclusion of the social and collective action of individuals and groups and the value that these social networks can bring. More fluid identities of belonging and landscape attachment must also be employed to recognise the myriad understandings that individuals assign to their volunteering. This means not completely ruling out feelings such as national identity or pride, but including them within the other emotional and ethical values that can be ascribed to human-nature interactions within active environmental volunteering.

The landscapes of the volunteering were central to the practices and performances of the volunteer. Specific places have been proposed in the geography literature as places that promote and maintain health (Gesler, 1992; Williams, 1999; Kearns and Moon, 2002). Conradson (2005a) describes this view of a therapeutic landscape as a 'positive physiological and psychological outcome deriving from a person's imbrication with a particular socio-natural-material setting' (ibid: 339). Immersion in green spaces was often

cited as being important to an individual's initial group involvement and their continued motivations to volunteer. This interaction with the land, encouraged by the environmentally focused tasks involved, produced a number of responses that were embodied and multi-sensory. These could be both positive and negative. Volunteers placed importance on exposure to their surroundings, emphasising their physical and emotional connection to the land which would often bring about both pleasurable and painful moments. According to Conradson (2005b) these incidents of a potential therapeutic encounter in these natural spaces could be particularly emphasised by a number of factors: distance from everyday routines and domestic demands; close to the natural environment in uncommon ways; opportunity for solitude and friendships; emergence of a new dimension of selfhood. Collins and Kearns (2007) cite a fifth way to achieve a potential therapeutic encounter as being able to carry out exercise and physical activity in these natural spaces. This thesis has demonstrated how each of these dimensions can be applied to environmental volunteering experiences and how different volunteer groups interact distinctly from each other. The thesis has particularly shown how some of these factors can also be applied to not only physically removed spaces, but also to local spaces (in relation to the individual volunteer). New discoveries can be made and local landscapes viewed in dissimilar aspects to create the 'uncommon ways' of interacting with landscape and creating a mental distance from everyday routines that would normally be associated with a more removed form of environmental volunteering. A mental distance can therefore be applied to a natural environment. That creates a sense of removal that is not solely ascribed to a physical distance from the everyday. These findings can be applied to revealing new insights into the academic literature, but also the policy and practitioner context that the environmental volunteering operates.

9.3.3 Contributing to the policy context within the Scottish Government and the Forestry Commission

This section will particularly address the fourth aim of the thesis that looks to inform policy relevant debates within the Forestry Commission and the Scottish Government on environmental volunteering. The studentship was part funded by the Forestry Commission and this contact resulted in an awareness of the possible policy relevance of the research. At various stages of the thesis, this contact took the form of attending forestry and landscape conferences and presenting initial findings to an audience of individuals that work for Forest Research. This meant that feedback and discussions could be focussed from the policy and practitioner perspective and not just from academic colleagues and conferences. In addition to this, three months were taken out from the PhD work to take part in a Scottish Government placement. This involved working in the Science and Society team within the Office of the Chief Researcher. This provided insight into how the work within the Government had a consistent focus on the National Performance Framework. This focus will be explained below in relation to the thesis themes and aims.

When coming into power in 2007, the new Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) Government established a National Performance Framework where Scottish Ministers entered into a new relationship with local authorities and their community planning partners. This sets out the high level Government Purpose, five strategic objectives, 15 national outcomes and 45 national indicators. The overall purpose was ‘to focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth’ (Scottish Government, 2007:2). The Directorates of the Government all had objectives that fed into this purpose. The table below outlines where the themes of the thesis can find ways to contribute to these subsequent objectives and outcomes:

Table 9.1: PhD thesis themes and Scottish Government objectives and outcomes.

PhD theme	Strategic Objective	National Outcome
Emotional, physical and social well-being Therapeutic landscape experiences	Healthier	‘We live longer, healthier lives’
Contact with the natural outdoors Environmental volunteering Ecological citizenship	Greener	‘We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations’ ‘We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production’
Active citizenship Community involvement and social capital	Safer and Stronger	‘We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others’

The thesis can talk to the strategic objectives through questions of how environmental volunteering can provide myriad well-being impacts. The previous sections in this chapter have shown that volunteering experiences can contribute to a feeling of physical and emotional well-being through the activity of the group and also the activity of the body. Contact with the natural environments and green spaces have built upon motivations for personal well-being, but also for protecting and conserving areas for future generations. At the core of this is the ethical standpoint of the volunteer, reflecting a concern for overall local and global impacts of humans on natural environments. Finally, the group work

provides opportunities to interact with a wider community, building social capital and creating networks of support and resilience. In the context of environmental volunteering, Dalgleish describes these aspects as the ‘people agenda’ (Dalgleish, 2006: 10) in her report to the then Scottish Executive on the potential for environmental volunteering to deliver policy objectives. The report also highlights that there is ‘scarcely any relevant research in this area’ (ibid: 8). Dalgleish sees this lack of research as a particular problem when it is understood that environmental volunteering can be seen as being able to deliver a positive outcome to a wide range of these objectives. The thesis is reflecting this by moving from talking about volunteering and the voluntary sector, to looking at the volunteers themselves, looking at their motivations and the effects that volunteering has on their well-being. This extends the understanding of these themes beyond those commonly focussed on in policy analysis (Horton and Kraftl, 2009). This is necessary to understand well-being beyond policy and as ‘a condition that is once collective and contextually sensitive; that incorporates understandings about the sociality of materials and of emotions and their interweaving with the lives of individuals, communities and societies’ (Pain and Smith, 2010: 301). Well-being, as used in policy, needs to recognise this interweaving of sociality, emotions, and individual and community lives. The Scottish Forestry Strategy (2006) begins to address some of these connections by deliberately setting up a forestry resource that provides ‘opportunities for all’, ‘stronger communities’ and ‘forestry for and with people’ (Scottish Executive, Scottish Forestry Strategy Vision and Principles, 2006: 8). It is at the practitioner level that the findings of this thesis can contribute most to the themes within the vision and principles of the Strategy. The embodied and multi-sensory experience of ‘actively engaging’ with environmental volunteering is where a great deal of the value that comes from. Emotional connections to spaces and landscapes are central, but the ways in which engagement happens are just as important as the location. In other words, ‘it is not always enough just to “be” in a place to guarantee a “therapeutic” outcome: rather there is a need for a skill or artistry in our engagements with place’ (Thrift,

1998: 310-311). The volunteers must feel the freedom and ability to express their own values and ethics through *how* they perform their volunteering and this must be from their own convictions and terms. This introduces interesting questions about how major policy pushes such as the ‘Big Society’ (Cabinet Office, 2010) will be received by volunteers. Instrumentalised and politicised forms of citizenship such as these, although appearing to reflect the aims of the volunteer groups, may undermine the value many volunteers place on their own motivations and actions and how they embody and act on these convictions.

9.4 Future research directions: well-being and active environmental volunteering

The thesis has identified a range of well-being implications that can be harnessed from active environmental volunteering. These have been grouped along the themes of landscape and nature, embodiment and physicality and community and social impacts. This final section identifies possible future research directions that have been raised in the completion of the thesis.

9.4.1 Methodological issues and the advantage of longitudinal research

The ethnographic approach to the research, incorporating complementary strategies of semi-structured interviewing, focus group work and participant observation allowed a way of viewing the ‘doing’ and ‘being’ involved in environmental volunteering. This went further than previous studies and reports in environmental volunteering (O’Brien *et al.*, 2010; Dalgleish, 2006) by giving scope to go beyond just the vocalised motivations volunteers give for taking part in active environmental work. Spending time with the case study groups at committee meetings and social functions provided an insight into how the groups work. This incorporated not just the final product (i.e. the task) but the processes that are needed for the groups to function. These included a whole range of activities, such

as completing funding applications, consulting with local councils, distributing the minutes of meetings or passing out flyers in the local community. None of these activities is environmental, but all were necessary to ensure the continued running and functioning of the group.

Using participant observation over a period of fourteen months with the groups assisted the thesis in looking more effectively at how the volunteering was embodied and performed by those that were taking part. That included the more functional aspects discussed above, but it also involved being immersed in the social and physical landscapes of the volunteering. It was this approach that led to discovering the particular aspects of landscape and task that engender specific forms of emotional well-being. The layers of the volunteering could therefore be exposed and understood. This involved understanding why volunteers were there (their motivations) but also what was distinct about environmental volunteering. This was exhibited through attachment to place, personal ethics, physical involvement in landscapes and social connections. Each of these, and through a combination of them, contributes to well-being in some way. It was these interactions that could be seen through this methodology that enriched the understanding of the volunteering and will be discussed in the rest of the section. This, however, may be usefully built upon by taking a more longitudinal approach.

The research methodology in the thesis was designed to maximise the length of time that could be spent with each of the case study groups. Over this fourteen month period the results have clearly shown the dynamic nature of the individual environmental volunteers and of the groups. However, the use of longitudinal research, following the experiences of the volunteers over a lengthier period of time, would allow a more in-depth understanding of the role that volunteering plays in the life cycle of the individual and the impact it has on their lives and that of the communities around them. This would also give space for

examining the relationship between environmental volunteering and social and personal well-being, and the directionality of this association. This would mean looking at the changing situations of the individuals and the groups over time, presenting a stronger case on the impact of the volunteering over this time.

9.4.2 Investigating funding and practitioner interventions

One of the issues that the groups encountered with funders is that the provision and use of this money would often be restricted in the way it was allowed to be used by the groups. It would be useful to explore this further by examining how groups think this form of funding could be better allocated and tracked. The groups themselves (especially Community Environment Group) found that they had to be inventive with their funding to meet the needs across the whole group. At the same time, they also had to be accountable to Scottish Natural Heritage for this money. In addition to looking at funding allocation from a volunteer organiser perspective, it would also be useful to look at policy interventions from a volunteer viewpoint. This would have its roots in volunteer motivations and values (as shown in this thesis), but it would also look at the practicalities of the volunteering that individuals place importance in. This would make it easier for volunteer practitioner organisations to target and attract volunteers, although care must be taken not to alienate those who would not normally volunteer. This links into real and perceived barriers to volunteering.

9.4.3 Further research on the barriers to participation

A number of barriers have been highlighted in the literature that prevents individuals volunteering in the first place. These include a perceived lack of spare time (Low *et al.*, 2007), a negative image of volunteering amongst young people (Lukka and Ellis Paine,

2001), a lack of available information (Brewis *et al.*, 2010), overly formal recruitment procedures, (Gaskin, 2003) or lack of appealing opportunities (Gaskin, 1998). While these are all barriers to getting involved in volunteering, there are others that highlight barriers to continued participation. These are outlined by O'Brien *et al.* (2010) in relation to environmental volunteering. The first difficulty is if volunteers are being asked to carry out mundane tasks on a regular basis, then it will put them off returning. Volunteers are also more likely to disengage with an organisation if they do not get feedback on how their work fits into a wider context, both organisationally and beyond. A further obstacle involves the provision of equipment or information necessary for a particular task. If these resources are not provided sufficiently, either due to lack of resources or planning on the part of the organisation, then volunteers feel as if they cannot complete the tasks adequately. Finally, if a group appears exclusive or unwelcoming to new people then this will adversely affect continued volunteer participation. Some of these continued barriers were revealed within the thesis. Furthermore, as shown by the volunteer demographics in the survey (Chapter 4), the participants were often from a narrow ethnic grouping (88% as mostly white). Niyazi (1996) found that people from ethnic minorities felt excluded from mainstream formal volunteering, as their culture did not fit with bureaucratic white, middle-class orientated voluntary organisations. In addition to this, it has been suggested that the image of volunteering may be problematic for disabled people, as there has been a tendency to cast disabled people as passive recipients of help, rather than as active volunteers (IVR, 2004). Further research is needed into investigating these issues of participation, while at the same time acknowledging how different groups can participate in more informal aspects of volunteering that are perhaps not represented in many formal volunteering studies and statistics.

This thesis has covered a wide range of themes that interact with environmental volunteering. This has investigated the initial and continuing motivations that volunteers

encountered through their volunteering. Issues around active and non-active tasks and the natural landscapes and spaces in which they were conducted were also examined. There has been an in-depth discussion of the ways in which volunteers interact with notions of community and active and ecological citizenship. Throughout the thesis, there was an exploration of emotional, social and physical well-being that the participants experience. This has provided insight into how these notions of well-being interact, which specifically contributes to literatures on emotional geographies, therapeutic landscapes, embodiment and, community and citizenship. In addition to this, the results of the thesis have been shown to speak directly to current policy and practitioner issues within the Forestry Commission Scotland and the Scottish Government.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire Cover Letter



University of Dundee
Department of Geography
School of Social Science
Perth Road
Dundee
DD1 4HN

(Date)

Dear Sir/Madam

I am inviting you to participate in a research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Forestry Commission looking at the benefits of environmental volunteering in Scotland. I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Dundee engaged in a doctoral level project examining the outcomes of environmental volunteering in terms of the health and well-being of participants. The issue is receiving attention from the Scottish Executive and other funding bodies and this study will help clarify what the key benefits are in this regard. Enclosed is a short questionnaire concerning your organization and environmental volunteering activities and outcomes. I urge you to complete this questionnaire and return it in the SAE in order to contribute to this important research agenda. It should take you about fifteen minutes to complete.

This survey is being sent to specially selected organisations in eight key areas of Scotland in order to gain an up-to-date snap-shot of environmental volunteering organisations and activities. The responses will be used to compile a database of environmental groups across various council districts that have individuals actively volunteering for them. I hope this policy-relevant research will go in some way towards raising the profile of environmental volunteering organisations in Scotland, and increasing funding and support for this valuable activity.

Please take the time to complete this questionnaire and return it to me using the pre-paid envelope enclosed as soon as possible and by the (date) at the latest. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you can contact me at the e-mail address or telephone number below.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Muirhead
PhD Researcher

E-mail: s.z.muirhead@dundee.ac.uk
Office Tel: 01382 384286 (Mon – Thurs)
Mobile Tel: 07890347824 (Anytime)

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Environmental Volunteering in Scotland



Thank you for completing the following questionnaire. The overall research is concerned with investigating the benefits of environmental volunteering. These responses will be used to compile a database of environmental volunteering groups that are active across Scotland. The questionnaire should take around fifteen minutes to complete. Try to answer as many questions as possible by placing a tick in the appropriate box/es or by expanding on answers where indicated. Please feel free to add further comments in the space provided at the end.

Stuart Muirhead
Department of Geography
School of Social Science
University Of Dundee
Perth Road
Dundee
DD1 4HN



Section 1: Your Organisation

1. What is the name of your organisation?

.....

2. Which of the following best describes your organisation?

1	Community of self-help group, club or association	
2	Voluntary organisation or charity	
3	Not-for-profit concern	
4	Statutory agency or project*	
5	Commercial enterprise*	
6	Other (please specify):	

* You may have received this questionnaire in error. In some cases the environmental volunteering is only part of the work. If this is the case please continue. If not, and you have no environmental volunteering activity that forms part of your organisation do not fill in the rest of the form, but please return it. Thank you for your time.

3. Is your organisation

1	a local independent organisation with no links to regional/national organisations	
2	a local independent organisation with affiliations to a regional/national organisation	
3	a branch of a regional/national association	

4. Which of the following best describes the role of your organisation?

	Main Role	Additional Roles
Direct environmental action		
Provision of services		
Campaigning		
Research		
Advocacy		
Other (please state):		

5. Which of the following best describes the main and additional sources of funding for your organisation?

	Main Funding	Additional Funding	Annual Funding in £'s (if available)
Fundraising			
Donations			
Local authority grants (specify if selected):			
Contracts/service level agreements for services (please specify):			
Scottish Executive funding (specify if selected):			
National Government (Westminster) funding			
Budget allocated from umbrella regional/national body			
Lottery			
European Union			
Other (please specify):			

6. In what kind of environments does your organisation work?
(A if a main activity and B for additional activities, please tick all applicable)

	A	B
Woodland		
Gardens		
Coastal		
River		
Farm		
Park		
Other (please specify):		

Section 2: Your Volunteers and Paid Staff

7. How many paid staff work within your organisation?

Full time	
Part time	

8. How many unpaid volunteers do you have at present?

Full time	
Part time	

9. In the last two years, has the number of members:

		Paid	Unpaid
1	Increased		
2	Decreased		
3	Remained about the same		

10. In the last two years, has attracting/recruiting suitable volunteers become:

1	Easier	
2	About the same	
3	More difficult	
4	Not applicable	

11. Which of the following accurately describes your volunteers?
(please circle)

a) Gender

Mostly male	Mostly female	Equal mix
Male only	Female only	Don't know

b) Ethnicity

Mostly white	Mostly Afro-Caribbean	Mostly Asian
Other (please state):	A roughly equal mix of (please state):	Don't know

c) Employment

Mostly full-time employed	Mostly part-time employed	Mostly unemployed	Mostly retired
Mostly student	Other (please state):	A roughly equal mix of (please state):	Don't know

d) Age

Mostly under 16	Mostly 16-19	Mostly 20-25	Mostly 26-34	Mostly 35-60
Mostly 61- 74	Mostly 75+	A roughly equal mix of (please state):		Don't know

12. Do your volunteers share any particular characteristics:

Being a local resident	
Those with disabilities	
Those with mental ill-health	
Medical/hospital carers	
Carers	
Financial hardship	
Homeless people	
Travellers/refugees/migrants	
Criminal offenders/ex-offenders	
Victims of crime	
Victims of abuse	
Professional people, business people	
Other (please specify):	

Section 3: Environmental Volunteering Motivations and Benefits

13. How important are the following in motivating people to volunteer for your organisation?

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Altruism			
Improve local community environment			
Fill in time due to unemployment			
Fill in time due to retirement			
Work experience			
Training			
Develop their social networks			
Improve their mental health			
Improve their physical health			
Previous volunteering experience			
Recommendation of friend/relative			
Other (please state):			

14. How much time, on average, do active volunteers normally devote to volunteering?

	Number of Volunteers
Less than one hour a week	
1-5 hours a week	
6-10 hours a week	
11-20 hours a week	
21-30 hours a week	
Over 20 hours a week	

- i) Please expand on question 14 if the volunteering work is particularly seasonal or project-based as opposed to consistent throughout the year:

.....

.....

.....

15. What activities do your volunteers partake in?
(A if a main activity and B for additional activities, please tick all applicable)

	A	B
Litter clearing		
Vegetation planting		
Tree planting		
Seed propagation		
Weeding		
Fence/wall building		
Path construction		
Signage erection		
Plant identification		
Surveys of plant or animal populations		
Other (please specify):		

16. What do you feel are the main benefits to the volunteers from the environmental volunteering they carry out?

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Physical health improvement			
Improved confidence			
New social networks			
Application of learned skills to personal life			
Application of learned skills to work life			
Mental health improvement			
Sense of achievement			
Other (please specify):			

- i) Please expand on the boxes that you have ticked above by briefly outlining the specific benefits that you feel your volunteers gain from the work they do:

.....

.....

.....

.....

- ii) Do you find the benefits of environmental volunteer work hard to define and measure in terms of how the volunteers benefit mentally?

.....

.....

Section 4: Links to Other Organisations

17. Do you have any links with national environmental organisations?

	Specify type of relationship
Greenspace Scotland	
Scottish Natural Heritage	
Scottish Wildlife Trust	
Plantlife Scotland	
Forestry Commission Scotland	
National Trust for Scotland	
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	
Other (please Specify):	

i) What do you feel are the benefits or drawbacks of the links with the organisations selected above?

.....

.....

.....

18. Do you have any links with national volunteering organisations?

	Specify type of relationship
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	
Volunteer Development Scotland	
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations	
Other (please specify):	

i) What do you feel are the benefits or drawbacks of the links with the organisations selected above?

.....

.....

.....

19. Do you have any links with other local/regional organisations?
(please specify organisations and type of relationship)

.....

.....

20. Are you aware of the Scottish Executive Volunteering Strategy 2004-2009?

Yes	
No	

- i) If yes, has this affected you in any way?

Yes	
No	

Please specify if yes:

.....

.....

21. Are you aware of the ongoing Scottish Executive discussions about putting together an environment and health strategy for Scotland?

Yes	
No	

- i) If yes, do you feel this will affect you in any way?

Yes	
No	

Please specify if yes:

.....

.....

Please use the space below to write any additional comments about issues covered in this questionnaire or about the questionnaire itself:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you again for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. Could you please return it as soon as possible, or by Wednesday 11th July at the latest, in the pre-paid envelope provided.

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Overarching research questions:

- 1) What are the initial and continuing motivations for individuals to participate in environmental volunteering?
- 2) What kinds of environmental volunteering work enables well-being and social capital?
- 3) What are these well-being and nature relations at both an individual and community level?
- 4) How are these relations engendered in terms of mental well-being through specifically 'active' environmental volunteer work?

Specific questions to be covered:

Introduction and personal details

- 1) How did you get involved in this volunteer group?
- 2) How long have you been volunteering here?
- 3) Can you tell me a bit about your life outside the volunteer group?

(Prompts: job, interests, family)

General information and motivations

- 4) Why did you pick this particular group to work with?
- 5) How much time do you commit to your volunteering work?
- 6) How would you describe the work of the group?
- 7) How would you describe your role within the group?

Effects of volunteering

- 8) What would you describe as the benefits of the group?
- (Prompts: environment, community, organisations, individuals)
- 9) What do you see as the benefits to the local community?

10) How do you feel about the landscape you are volunteering in?

(Prompts: more important to them – this landscape or environment in general?)

11) Do you see yourself as looking after the landscape for future generations?

(Prompts: stewardship, geological time compared to ‘human’ time, tree lifespan)

12) What is it about working with trees/woodland that drew you to this particular field? (*depending on the group*)

13) How important is the seasonality of the work?

(Prompts: dynamic landscape, seasons, plant cycles, weather, practicality, emotional changes)

14) Has your work changed the way you view the area?

15) What do you feel you have gained from your own volunteering work?

(Prompts: physical/mental health improvement, confidence, socialising, satisfaction/achievement, application of skills to work/personal life)

16) Why do you continue to come back and work with the group?

(Prompts: motivations to continue, why get up in the morning for this?)

17) Do you feel there are any drawbacks related to the work?

(Prompts: lack of fulfilment, financial, lack of training/support)

18) Are there any ways that you think the group could be improved?

(Prompts: encouraging people to volunteer, tasks, work, set-up)

19) What do you feel are the main differences between working with an environmental volunteering organisation as opposed to say a sports or social health voluntary organisation?

(Prompts: was this a large factor on why you chose this organisation?)

Appendix 4: Focus Group Schedule

Focus Group Schedule

Overarching research questions:

- 1) What are the initial and continuing motivations for individuals to participate in environmental volunteering?
- 2) What kinds of environmental volunteering work enables well-being and social capital?
- 3) What are the emotional well-being and nature relations at both an individual and community level?
- 4) How are these relations engendered in terms of well-being through specifically 'active' environmental volunteer work?

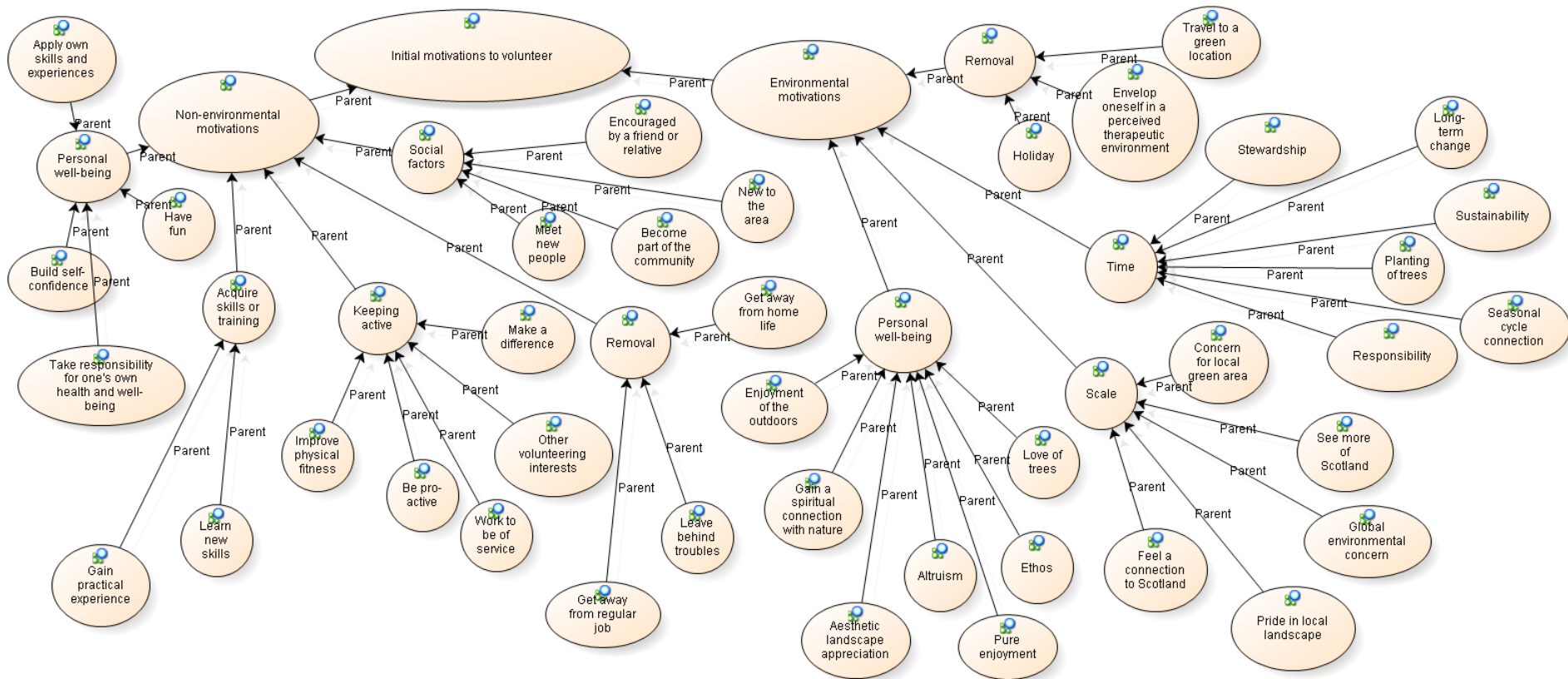
General introduction to the focus group (brief thank you, summary of the project and basic guidelines of what the moderator's job will be)

Specific questions/themes to be aired:

- Motivations to volunteer
 - 1) Why do people volunteer for this group?
 - 2) What benefits do they attain from this work?
 - 3) What are the main drivers – altruism/environmental care/local involvement...?
- Importance of group work compared to individual work
 - 1) Why is this important?
 - 2) What 'extra' benefits does it enable?
 - 3) Is there an optimum size – why/what do you feel this is?
 - 4) Does this encourage people to keep coming back?
Is there an added 'pressure' from group work?
 - 5) What type of people volunteer?
Are there any inclusions/exclusions?
- Landscapes of volunteering
 - 1) Benefits to local community
 - 2) Local environment versus general environment
 - 3) Does this change the way you view this area?
 - 4) Why specifically tree/woodland work?
or why specifically environmental work?
- Temporal aspect of environmental work
 - 1) Importance of seasonality
 - 2) Stewards of the environment

- 3) Preserve for future generations
- 4) Do you see it as a responsibility?

Appendix 5: Initial Motivations Coding Tree Example



Appendix 6: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: 'Nature and well-being: building social and emotional capital through environmental volunteering'

Please fill in this form to indicate that you are prepared to take part in this research project. If you need any further information, please contact Stuart Muirhead at s.z.muirhead@dundee.ac.uk or on 01382 384286. Please read the Information Sheet for additional details about the project.

1) Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?

Answer: Yes or No: _____

2) Have you been given an opportunity to ask questions and further discuss this study?

Answer: Yes or No: _____

3) Have you received satisfactory answers to all of your questions?

Answer: Yes or No: _____

4) Have you now received enough information about this study?

Answer: Yes or No: _____

5) Do you understand that your participation is entirely voluntary?

Answer: Yes or No: _____

6) Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without any reason?

Answer: Yes or No: _____

Do you agree to take part in this study?

Answer: Yes or No: _____

By signing below you are agreeing that you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and that you agree to take part in this research study.

Participant's signature:

Date:

.....

.....

Printed name of person obtaining consent:

Signature of person obtaining:

.....

.....

Appendix 7: Organisation Participant Information Sheet

ORGANISATION PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: 'Nature and well-being: building social and emotional capital through environmental volunteering'

My name is Stuart Muirhead and I am a PhD researcher in the Department of Geography at the University of Dundee. You are being asked to take part in a research study, which will be looking at the health impact of actively taking part in environmental volunteering. The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Forestry Commission who have an active interest in the outputs of this research.

The aim of this PhD project is to examine the links between well-being, nature and environmental volunteering, with a focus on how, why, for whom and in what ways social and emotional benefits can be revealed through active nature work. This part of the study will involve the use of different research methods, including semi-structured interviewing, working with the volunteers during projects and conducting focus group work.

I hope this policy-relevant research will go in some way towards raising the profile of environmental volunteering organisations in Scotland, and increasing funding and support for this valuable activity.

TIME COMMITMENT:

The study will take place over a number of weeks/months with the organisation during a particular project or series of events. Stuart Muirhead will be working with the volunteers during this time and will hold interviews and focus group work with both the volunteers and the organisers (as appropriate). The exact period of work and timing of interviews and focus group work will be decided between Stuart and the organisation and individuals taking part.

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION:

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation.

RISKS:

There are no known risks for you in this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY:

Interviews will be recorded, but only the researcher will have access to this recording and they will be destroyed after the research project has finished.

The data collected will not contain any personal information about participants and no one will link the data provided to individual identities and names. Names will be made anonymous and the only identifier used will be the organisation name.

Appendix 8: Individual Participant Information Sheet

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: 'Nature and well-being: building social and emotional capital through environmental volunteering'

My name is Stuart Muirhead and I am a PhD researcher in the Department of Geography at the University of Dundee. You are being asked to take part in a research study, which will be looking at the health impact of actively taking part in environmental volunteering. The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Forestry Commission who have an active interest in the outputs of this research.

The aim of this PhD project is to examine the links between well-being, nature and environmental volunteering, with a focus on how, why, for whom and in what ways social and emotional benefits can be revealed through active nature work. This part of the study will involve the use of different research methods, including semi-structured interviewing, working with the volunteers during projects and conducting focus group work.

I hope this policy-relevant research will go in some way towards raising the profile of environmental volunteering organisations in Scotland, and increasing funding and support for this valuable activity.

TIME COMMITMENT:

The study will take place over a number of weeks with the organisation during a particular project or series of events. Stuart Muirhead will be working with the volunteers during this time and will hold interviews and focus group work with both the volunteers and the organisers.

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION:

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation.

RISKS:

There are no known risks for you in this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY:

Interviews will be recorded, but only the researcher will have access to this recording and they will be destroyed after the research project has finished.

The data collected will not contain any personal information about you and no one will link the data you provided to your identity and name. Names will be made anonymous and the only identifier used will be the organisation name.

